

THE HELPFUL HOME

NEWSLETTER

Issue # 25



Spring 2009

Some information about this newsletter

The Spring 2009

issue of the Helpful Home newsletter, yours from **STONEHOLLOW, Inc.**

FINE HOME INSPECTIONS & TESTING.

Finally, warmer temps and the expectation that comes with Spring! I'm so needing a change of seasons and the optimism of Spring has me outside already scratching the grass, pruning the shrubs and thinking about projects that will be important as the earth warms up. This issue we offer up our usual quarterly check-lists and tips for making your home safer, as well as some articles contributed by some of my friends who support this newsletter and the radio show. I've asked David Curtis from Avon Pest, Peter Aquilina from Deer Defence, Rich Cunningham from Ed's Garage door, and Jim Jasensky from Oasis Environmental Solutions to offer up some Spring tips in their area of expertise and we will fill you in on what's going on around the Gladstone household and Spring projects we are working on. If you have been listening to our weekly radio show Saturday mornings or streaming it on the internet, you know we have been powering up the show with more guests and topics of interest and we are planning some "live" remotes coming up over the next few months. On the web site we are answering your questions for repairs, maintenance and safety issues. To participate just send us an e-mail at steve@stonehollow.com. Best Regards, as always...

Steve Gladstone.



Call us at 800-356-9611

Please remember **Stonehollow** offers **Energy Audits, Safety Inspections, Infrared Camera Evaluations** (for leaks and energy Loss), **Renovation Consulting** (keeping an eye on the quality of the contractor's work), & **Pre-listing Inspections** for people ready to sell. With



over 25 years of experience we have many great ideas... that work. Let us help make your home safe and assure it is operating properly. E-mail us at:

steve@stonehollow.com, let us assist you.



This newsletter has a multitude of good ideas and tips but it does have some ticks, count them up and the first five correct answers e-mailed to steve@stonehollow.com we receive will get a 25' tape measure for being so house smart...deadline May 15, '09



Are You Listening on the Radio? Or the Internet...

Now there's 3 ways you can listen to the radio show...Tune in WSTC 1400/WNLK 1350 (am) on your radio, turn your computer on at www.wstcwnlk.com, or listen to some recorded shows at www.stonehollow.com on the radio archive page on our web site. We are live Saturday mornings from 8-9 on "Around the House". Steve & his guests discuss home issues, safety and maintenance. And you can call in! It's fun to listen, and you'll learn how to do things around your home. Tune in weekly for trivia prizes, chat, & lots of very useful home info. We may just have the answer to a question you've been meaning to ask.



The Spring Helpful Home

Check List:



Remember: If it's not safe for you to do some of these suggestions, or you simply do not understand how to do them, please hire a professional. I want your home to be safe, but there's little point if you overdo it, get hurt, or break something. Please, know your limits.

Exterior Stuff:

Rooftops: Spring is a great time to have a professional check your roof surfaces for winter damage and repair needs. Have the gutters cleaned and the flue checked. Make sure the attic is dry and watch for any staining during our rainy months. Roofs typically last 20 years.

Make sure your leader drains direct water away from the home and not onto driveways and walks. Consider drainage problems before re-paving or planting new shrubs & trees.

Lime on acidic soil adjusts the ph and will help your grass grow much thicker & greener.

Gather up twigs and brush for those last romantic fires on cool evenings. Nature often prunes trees with the wind. and can provide free fuel when you are picking up in your yard.

In the yard: Check the kids swing sets for rot, soft wood, mold, sharp edges & splinters, popped nails and loose hardware. Tighten nuts and lubricate swings and hardware. Pressure wash swingsets and playground pieces to avoid mold.

Make sure your house numbers can be easily visible from the street. In an emergency seconds can save your life. And it's the law.

Interior Things:

Spring, for many, is a time for cleaning & organizing but big projects are often daunting unless broken up into smaller more workable pieces. Don't overdo it. Don't take on an overwhelming project. These are doomed to fail.

Look carefully at older ladders and step stools. Falling off them will cost more than replacing them with newer sturdier ones. Splurge on a new one. Karp's has a great selection of safe ladders.

Insulate your water pipes to avoid condensation drips in summer. If you have a well, insulate the cold water storage tank with bubble wrap.

Add a battery operated water sensor on the floor near cold water tanks, your washer and by the water heater. These can save you damages from floods & leaks. Maintain fresh batteries.

Safety items: Every Season, Check batteries on smoke, heat & carbon monoxide detectors, Make sure fire extinguishers are charged, and hang them in plain sight. Have a fire drill and set up a logical meeting place for your family to gather in an emergency. Make sure your family is aware what to do when there is a problem.

Radon Levels High? If you've tested your home for radon & need a radon reduction system, don't fret. Installing a system is easy and affordable. For a typical home a plastic pipe is installed by a State Approved & trained installer through the slab, then piped to a fan in the attic, (or outside) that exhausts to the exterior at roof height. The average home costs \$900-\$1500 and can be fixed relatively quickly. Once the unit is functioning the levels in the home should be substantially lower. Follow up with a 2nd radon air test to make sure the levels remain low for your family. For more info call Jim at Oasis Environmental Solutions 203-942-9983.



Cleaning Soot off the Surfaces of the fireplace: The dry removal method requires a "professional" chemically treated soot sponge, these are available at janitorial supply stores. It is a special dry chemically impregnated sponge which scoops up and absorbs dirt and soot into its pores. You should use until the sponge gets filthy dirty and then switch wiping area to a cleaner part of sponge. When it's filthy on all sides, remove surface layer by shaving dirty level with a razor blade to expose a new sponge surface. **Do Not** wring out sponge with water or clean it or you will ruin the chemical treatment. From www.doityourself.com.

There will be ticks out there !



Hello Spring! With all the beauty this season brings, its darkside can be disease carrying insects like the Deer Tick population in CT, as they begin to feed.



Did you know ? :

- Adult ticks are the size of a sesame seed
- Ticks do not jump or fly
- Females will lay more then 2000 eggs each

- Deer population management must serve as the main tool to prevent Lyme's Disease.
- Ticks can live more then 1 year without food
- Ticks (in their nymph stage) are responsible for almost all of the Lyme's Disease cases

A look at your property landscape can identify hot zones. A treatment program along with landscape alterations (if possible) will reduce the number of ticks on the property and reduces the amount of any chemicals needed. Call us at Avon Pest Control to find out more about our Green Shield Certified program (866) 228 – 6611. David Curtis, Avon Pest Control

Problems we often see on Stonehollow Home inspections:



Lint from the dryer accumulating around the vent and on the deck. Regular clean-up is a good idea.




Look for areas around your home where water and debris can sit and cause deterioration of wood trim. Insects love wet wood and rot and mold typically follow. Clean up these areas and try to divert any ground water away.



A dryer vent that's broken or stuck open can let rain into the home or become a bird or bee's nest. Get it fixed!



Garage Door Safety Can Give You Peace of Mind:

Garage doors are one of the largest moving motorized pieces of equipment in your home. Photo-eyes located at the base of the doors can monitor them to make sure it is safe to close and not crush cars, possessions (that might have fallen close to the door), or children & pets. Auto reverse mechanisms prevent a heavy door from closing on an object, and this often has a sensitivity adjustment that should be tested regularly. Opener springs should have cables running through them to hold them in place in case they break. Children should be taught not to play around with automatic overhead doors. Homeowners should look at the springs regularly to make sure they look safe. Come visit our new showroom before you replace your door or openers. Call Ed's at: 203 847-1284. Some tips from Rich Cunningham, ED'S GARAGE DOORS. In Norwalk. 

Safety First with swings & Playground equipment:

Playground equipment can have popped nails, sharp edges and need sanding to prevent splinters. Tighten all hardware and look carefully at the condition of wood ladders and slides before allowing their use. Anything that is rusted should be replaced for safety.



This is a playground piece I built with my dad over 12 years ago. We pressure wash it every few seasons to clean it.

Help Your Friends:



Are they looking to buy a home? Tell them we'll get them the best home inspection services. **We promise to help your friends with the most important purchase of their lives!**

Stonehollow is the "protection" you need when buying or selling.

We are recommended by many banks, mortgage lenders and lawyers. Our name is also often given out by Realtors who know we are very picky, and that we spend the time looking carefully at a home. Some sales agents may think hiring a blind inspector will make for an easier transaction, but the careful evaluation by a trained team of inspectors will always protect the buyer, seller and sales agents from lawsuits and anger about missed items (after the sale is done). If you have heard we are tough, and very thorough...think what you would want in an inspection if your own kids were buying a home. There should never be a double standard when it comes to important purchases. Our inspectors are State Licensed, Have passed State and ASHI Certification Exams, we maintain on-going continuing education and we will do our best to let you know the true conditions of the home. For over 25 years we've been protecting buyers, sellers and Realtors in Fairfield, Putnam and Westchester Counties. Put Stonehollow on your side.



Safety & Maintenance Audits:

Are you doing all you can to keep your home safe and working at its best? Call us for a home safety and maintenance audit. We will show you how to "soup-up" your home to get the most bang for your buck. We'll help you find & eliminate unsafe conditions, and explain the sometimes confusing equipment that is heating, cooling, or trying to protect your home. Do you often wonder if bad things are happening in the attic, eaves and/or the crawlspace? Our trained inspectors will get into those areas and double check them for your safety. We look at the chimneys, heating systems, water heaters, and your electrical panel boxes, as well.

The Great House Project...

This month, we changed phone wires in the office requiring the furniture in the office to be moved away from the walls. So I couldn't just do the wiring and ignore the cobwebs and the dingy old paint could I? Now the office looks so



much better with a new coat of paint and coordinated colors on the trim and doors. I cleaned everything, re-organized and threw away lots of unnecessary items. This season we are installing more deer and privacy fencing in the rear yard. And cleaning out the gardens. One of the small pleasures around our home is for us to watch the bulbs poke out and add their beauty each year, especially after a long gray Winter.



For your protection:

All of our inspectors are (A.S.H.I.)
 American Society of Home Inspectors
 ASHI Certified Inspectors. (A.C.I.)

SPRING NEWSLETTER SALE !!!

Any home inspection performed for our radio listeners* (or newsletter readers*) will be discounted \$100 off the inspection, \$50 off the radon test and a free CO test (\$115 value) when services are done the same day. *You must mention this ad when booking the inspection on the phone. Rules are rules. (sale ends April 30,09)

Streaming? Around the World ! Saturday mornings from 8-9 on www.wstc/wnlk.com wherever you receive the internet. Going on vacation in some remote part of the world ? Now you can take us with you!

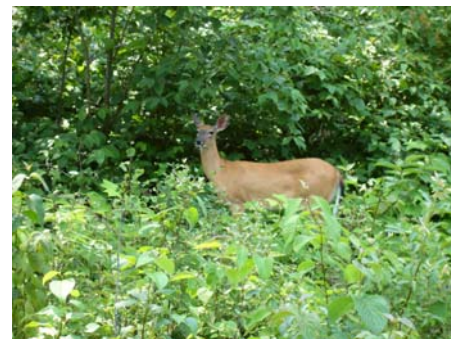
Call Toll Free 800-356- 9611

Wellness Inspections: Every homeowner wonders from time to time if their home is doing okay. If you are not handy you may be questioning whether there are ways to make your home more efficient, or improve the safety. You may be concerned about this winter's heating bills or want

more info about insulation, ventilation or the condition of your roof. We have been offering a Home Wellness Inspection as an easy way to answer all these questions and to help homeowners to learn about their home & develop a plan to follow that helps explain any deficiencies. Wellness inspections start for a small home at \$300 and go up based on square footage and the age of the home. For many this investment in their home can save them thousands of dollars in repairs and potential damages. Call us and we will set up an appointment for your personal home check-up. Steve Gladstone.



Although it is not unusual on an inspection to find the clutter can block potential water stains, termite tubes and damages. If your home is packed to the rafters it might be time to evaluate whether the stored items should be trashed, sold or given away.



Peter Aquilina from Deer Defence: says in his materials that “the buck stops here”, and in my yard that has certainly been the case for much of the deer season. Unfortunately when I leave my gates open, I know I am inviting Bambi and the rest of the herd to come in. But even with the gates open at the



driveway, with the rest of the front yard fenced, the property has seen far less deer, raccoons, possums and skunks than in previous years. And we certainly have had our share. The fence is great because it is almost invisible and allows your eye to see the trees and shrubbery and not feel closed in. Last year it was approved as a great alternative for pool fencing, and the cost for wood or aluminum fencing has become astronomical. When choosing deer fencing it is important to know that deer are just as apt to jump a fence or wiggle under one. When it comes to food... they will do whatever they can to eat (that is your flowers and shrubs). So a woven steel fence can outperform plastic and wood fencing. Also the fencing can run from tree to tree if the trees are along the area you wish to protect. If they are close enough posts may not be needed. Once the fencing is installed you will be amazed how nice it is not to worry about these animals grazing on your expensive plants. For an estimate call Peter at Deer Defence 203-550-8350.



Our Newsletter Sponsors: Please let our sponsors know you heard about them on the radio or in the newsletter. Listen Saturday mornings 8-9 am on WSTC/WNLK 1400/1350 "Around the House w/ Steve Gladstone"

Karp's Truevalue Hardware

Since 1926 485 Hope Street Stamford
 Stamford's Hardware Supermarket
 203-327-0460 7 Days a week
 Great Selection, Personal Service, Friendly,
 Professional Do-it-yourself Advice.

Stonehollow Home Inspection & Environmental Testing

Since 1983. Working only for you & Protecting your investment. Home Inspections, Home Wellness & Maintenance Inspections, Contractor Supervision, Thermal Imaging, Environmental Testing of Water & Air, Consulting and Forensic Inspections. Licensed & Insured in both CT NY Call Toll Free 1- 800-356-9611

Resource Systems

Computer Consultation, Web Design & Site Maintenance, Computer Software & Hardware Troubleshooting call Ed Kivell 203-329-3660

DeerDefence

The Pinnacle of Protection with steel web fencing Now approved for pool fencing enclosures, as well. Ask your local landscaper or Call: 203-550-8350 www.deerdefence. Peter Aquilina.

Ed's Garage Doors

for over 35 years, Sales, installations & the best service. Visit the largest Garage Door Showroom in New England now at 136 Water Street South Norwalk 203-847-1284 www.edsgaragedoors.com

Oasis Environmental Solutions

Radon Air & Water Mitigation Installations EPA Approved, PO Box 514 Redding Ridge, Ct. Jim Jasensky, call for a free estimate 203-268-6305

Roccie's Asphalt Paving

Driveways, walks, aprons & curbs, parking lots, Belgium block (203) 324-0311 for all your paving needs. www.rocciesasphalt.com

AAvon Pest Control

49 Ryan Street Stamford, CT, Termites, Ants Rodents & Other Wildlife issues, and so much more! 866-AAvon 11, Licensed & Fully Warranted Services office@aavonpestcontrol.com Green Shield Certified

CT. Basement Systems

-Solve your basement problems with one call, waterproofing, dehumidification, sump pump systems and lots more. 1-800-541-0487 www.basementsystems.com

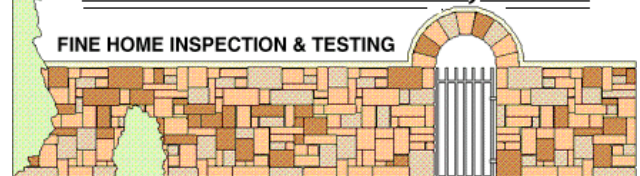
Sandi Gladstone- Realtor®

Weichert Capital Properties & Estates

If you're buying, selling, or just thinking about it...call me for exceptional service and great customer care. Office: 203-322-8800 www.sandigladstone.com Cell: 203-536-0498 Fax: 203-975-7799

STONEHOLLOW, INC.

FINE HOME INSPECTION & TESTING



The Helpful Home Newsletter can be downloaded for free. At www.stonehollow.com Please share a copy with others.

Copyright 2009 HPN, Inc. Annual Subscriptions \$5.00

