

# THE HELPFUL HOME

## NEWSLETTER

Issue #18

\*SPECIAL EDITION\*

Spring 2007

### 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'd like to say how happy I am that it's Spring, but alas it has taken a long time this year. At the time of this writing (around April 5) it's still not very warm and it's been a long annoying winter. The Real Estate market has been on a static slow period. It's probably the best time ever to buy a home with all these houses for sale and finally at prices that are truly negotiable. I am optimistic that the economy will pick up, but the news lately gets a bit depressing with large corporations hopping around and especially those leaving the state. How unfortunate for the employees of these companies to have to pack up and go through the moves and changes because of tax incentives elsewhere. The Route 7 interchange has been delayed again. The widening makes it ever so obvious that those in Wilton who opposed the limited access highway now have a superhighway gashing through the middle of their town. If you want to visit the trees that have been removed there is a tree graveyard further up route seven and they are just piled up there. What a shame. The good news is the New Haven school for home inspectors and our Manhattan location are growing and doing well. Several of our previous home inspection customers have considered home inspection as a new profession and have registered for classes on our web site at [www.learn2inspect.com](http://www.learn2inspect.com)

As we typically do in this newsletter, we will include some handy tips, a Springtime

Checklist and some info about our ever growing services...please do let us know what you think. Send us an e-mail at [steve@stonehollow.com](mailto:steve@stonehollow.com) and let us know how we can better assist you.

During the past few months we have been experiencing a number of amazing situations where we have found problems in homes being inspected, we have included some of these photos to key you into these safety issues so you can avoid them in your own home. If you need us, just call 203-327-6824. Remember telephone consultation is always free. Steve Gladstone



CT Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Steve Gladstone and State Senator Bob Duff at the recent rally for route 7.

**Stonehollow Fine Home Inspection & Environ. Testing (800) 356-9611**  
**Radon Testing, Water Testing, Lead Paint Surveys, Carbon Monoxide**

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

## The Spring 2007 Helpful Home Check List:

### Exterior Stuff:

**Rooftops:** are they free of debris? Clean the skylights, have a roofer examine your roof surface to make sure the integrity of the roof is still intact from this winter.

**Gutters...**are the hangers still intact, are they clean and clear? Is there freeze damage?

**Drainage:** How's your drainage doing around the home...is the pitch toward the foundation or away? Are your basement windows letting water in? While it's still cool, prune or re-locate shrubs that are too close to the home.

**Chimneys:** Clean those sooty flues during the warmer months to avoid costly last minute cleanings. Fix any damaged bricks and add screens and caps to keep water and squirrels out.

**Pruning:** Prune overhanging trees. These tend to drop on the home in heavy rains and wind storms. Precautionary tree-work can greatly reduce potential damages. Try to do this before the leaves take over (more material to chip up).

### In the yard:

**Play Areas:** Check the swing sets and play equipment. Tighten bolts, sand rough spots and check ladder spindles for rot.

**Power tools:** Fill with fresh gasoline and change the oil. A fresh spark plug properly gapped, couldn't hurt. Sharpened & lubricated blades will make use even easier. Store gas in proper containers, preferably in a metal storage cabinet outside your home.

**Holes:** Wander around your home looking for exterior holes and gaps and fill with expanding foam or caulk to keep drafts and rodents out.

**A/C Units:** Uncover the a/c units and clean any debris from them to improve their efficiency.

**Pools:** Make sure swimming pool gates self close and latch. Fencing should be 4 ft. high.

### Interior Things:

**Safety items:** Check batteries on Smoke, Heat & Carbon Monoxide detectors, Make sure all extinguishers are charged, and hang them in plain sight. Talk to your family about fire

safety, have a fire drill and set up a meeting place for your family to gather in an emergency.

**Spring cleaning:** Cobwebs, dust...sneezing!

How about a small painter's mask to keep the fine dust out of your lungs. They don't cost much, but you'll be happier you wore one.

**Laundry:** Clean the dryer lint line; make sure you upgrade the old plastic venting to new metal material. Make the run as short as possible and eliminate kinks and crushed sections...you'll improve your dryer's efficiency and save money and energy. Have you upgraded your electric dryer plug? New dryer plugs have four prongs not three. This can save your life if something malfunctions. Have an electrician do this. Change old rubber hoses on the washer and crumby valves...Call the plumber to upgrade these.

**Windows:** Clean & lubricate your windows. Check window locks to make sure they latch.

**Filters:** Change a/c filters & clean humidifiers.

### Have you read my appliance book?



[The Professional Inspector's Guide to Residential Appliance Inspection](#)

Price: **\$49.95 plus Tax & Shipping call 203-327-6824 to order.**

### Cleaning Tip: Wine- Stain Removal on Carpet and Upholstery

1. Mix one teaspoon of a neutral detergent (a mild detergent containing no alkalis or bleaches) with a cup of luke-warm water. Blot.
2. Mix one-third cup of white household vinegar with two-thirds cup of water. Blot.
3. Repeat step one, then sponge with clean water & blot.

Source: Anne Field, How to Care for Carpets and Rugs, the DuPont Clean Up Carpeting bulletin.

**Photos of screwy things we see on inspections: Would you see these are potentially dangerous?**



Metal clad wire installed in a plastic box.



Oil tank breather made out of PVC plastic



Where do you place your hands to hold on?



No extension pipe on relief valve and wrong duct material for chimney on a gas water heater.

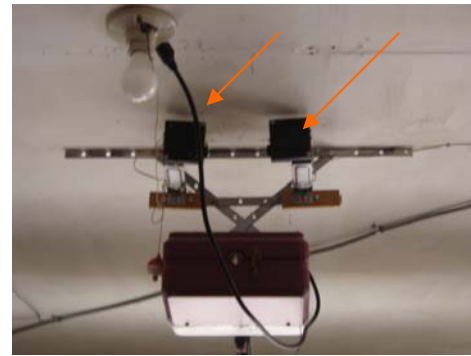


Photo eyes mounted on the ceiling instead of near the bottom of the garage door...

**Stonehollow now expanding to New Haven County areas**

Melvin Wilkes, ASHI Certified inspector and State of CT licensed inspector, announced the opening of the Stonehollow office in Hamden. In order to serve the New Haven area we are now letting clients interested our inspection services and Realtors know we are just a call away from providing you with the same care and thoroughness Stonehollow is known for in Fairfield, Putnam and Westchester counties.



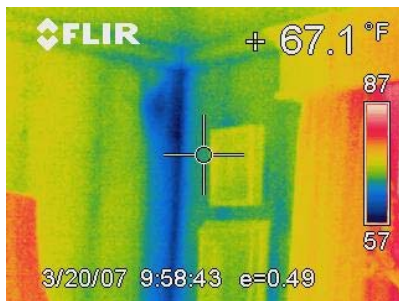
ASHI CERTIFIED Inspector Mel Wilkes points out damaged brick to a client on an inspection.

**Help Your Friends:**

Know someone looking to buy a home? Tell them we'll get them the best home inspection services. If we don't serve their area, we will refer a great home inspector who can help.

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

**Energy Audits: How much did you spend this Winter?** Call us for an energy audit. If water is entering your home thermal imaging may be able to find the leak or point to areas that are poorly insulated. This spring 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 scan of your home, call us.



A recent home checked with the Infrared Camera found this cold spot. (The blue area)

### For your protection:



Please hire an inspector who has **years of field experience, lots of technical knowledge, and who attends annual training & seminars, All of our inspectors are (A.S.H.I.) American Society of Home Inspectors-ASHI Certified Inspectors.**

### Household Tips: Radon

Did you know that over 22,000 people die annually from lung cancer even though they are not smokers? Radioactive radon gas can kill. Has your home ever been tested?

Our Continuous Radon Monitors are constantly monitoring the home during a test and gathering information that other types of testing equipment cannot. Trust your radon testing only to Continuous Monitors and a company that is

Nationally Certified by the National Radon Proficiency Program.



Femto-tech Monitors at work

Radon testing should always be done with the doors and windows kept closed, except for normal entry and exit. Large exhaust fans and fireplaces should not be used during the test.

### The Great House Project...

This Spring we are anxiously waiting to plant some shrubbery and upgrade our fencing and gates. Our side driveway will be getting some more prep. and we will be paving shortly after that. We've decided not to go ahead with a generator...way too expensive for the occasional brown out, and we've been doing interior painting and clean up all winter. Sandi can't wait for plants to erupt through the earth and as usual I will be pulling out the pressure washer to give the deck area a good cleaning. A back patio is once again on the list, and more exterior painting. Sounds like fall will be here before I know it!



A new driveway soon, maybe a future patio

[www.stonehollow.com](http://www.stonehollow.com)

e-mail us at:

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

**More Photos from the field:**



Steve teaching Home Inspection Field Training in New York.



**Home Safety 2007:**

This year we are pushing for Home Safety and Annual Maintenance Inspections. We have a special survey fee for homes less than 2000 sq ft. for \$300. We often speak to Senior groups & homeowners associations to discuss the importance of checking homes 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 additional questions you may have. Also if someone needs an inspection but cannot afford one call us and let us know the situation. We'll try to help them.

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[www.nagis.net](http://www.nagis.net) featuring David Yurman designer Jewelry.

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**Roccies Asphalt Paving** Driveways,

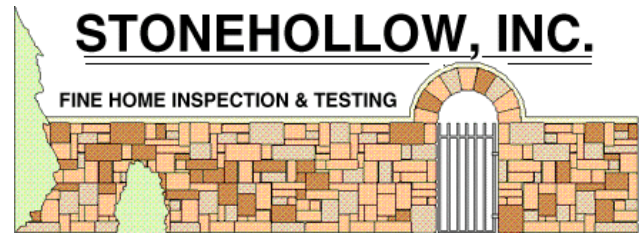
walks, aprons & curbs, parking lots, Belgium block (203) 324-0311 for all your paving needs.

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](mailto:steve@stonehollow.com) and we will fix it! Thanks!

*Did you know...?*

**Driveway sealcoat should not be added until the driveway has been paved and ages for several months.**

**Stairway treads should be at least 9½ inches wide and riser heights should not vary by more than 5/8" Risers should not be more than 7 ½ to 8 ½ inches to avoid trip hazards.**



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