

THE HELPFUL HOME

NEWSLETTER & RADIO LISTENER NEWS

Issue #17

SPECIAL EDITION Fall/Winter 2006

Some information about this newsletter



Here is your new Fall issue of the Helpful Home newsletter, your "gift" from **STONEHOLLOW, Inc. FINE HOME INSPECTIONS**. How quickly we have seen the seasonal changes take place. The trees are turning and Autumnal colors are dazzling. As the weather cools we need this season to focus on saving every energy buck available. We will try to point out lots of tips to save a watt, save a gallon of oil and save some gas, if for no other reason as you will need the money to spend at the gas pumps or at the car dealerships to buy a hybrid. As America gears up for our energy crunch, the fuel distributors keep telling us not to worry that fuel will be affordable, but I caution you that we are at the mercy of escalating pricing and I feel it's not going to be a downward turn for very long. So if you are ready and willing, let's get on in this issue with our Fall Check list (See this page). At the radio station we will be discussing energy savings, fall cleanups and new technologies with a wave of special guests. In addition we have some photos from the Oyster Fest, The Great Home Project and new Inspection Ideas for keeping your home safe and valuable. Thanks to Karp's Hardware, Stamford Lighting Fixture Co, Associated Water, Homeguard Environmental, DeerDefence and Kidde Corp. for helping fund the show and keeping us on the airwaves.

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



Governor Jodi Rell, Mike Fedele & Steve enjoy a beautiful day at the Norwalk Oyster Festival

Stonehollow 800-356-9611

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

Fall/Winter 2006 Helpful Home Check List:

Leaves, glorious leaves... where do we put them?

Sweepers, vacuums, blowers and rakes...ughhhh there has to be a better way.

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.

Gutters...yes it often feels like perpetual care, but alas, somebody has to do it. Clogged gutters and leaders mean overflowing, which can lead to water at grade, water in the basement, ice filled gutters and leaks.

Water will only flow away from your home if there is an adequate pitch away from the foundation. Walk around your home and look for low spots, basement windows in the flood plain and trees and shrubbery too close. Cool weather is a great time to prune or re-locate shrubs.

The Chimney: Are you planning romantic fires in your home without the soot coated smoke that oft comes along with multiple fire engines and sirens? Clean those sooty flues before heating season is upon us. The chimney sweeps are waiting for your call. But avoid the scams, try a local well established sweep with a list of checkable references.

Have them look for damaged brick, cracks in top courses and the crown... and make sure you have a chimney cap to keep animals out.

Prune overhanging trees. These tend to drop on the home in heavy rains and wind storms. Precautionary tree-work can greatly reduce potential damages.

Hose Bibbs, spigots, faucets: Yes it's time to drain them... turn off the interior valves and leave the exterior valves open a crack to avoid freeze-ups. Reel up the hoses and put them away dry.

In the yard: Put away swings, play equipment and yard implements. Power tools should be drained of gasoline and stabilizer added to keep them lubricated and ready for next spring.

Safety items:

Check batteries on Smoke, Heat & Carbon Monoxide detectors, Make sure extinguishers are charged, and hang them in plain sight. Keep combustibles away from heating equipment.

Make sure swimming pool gates self close and latch. Cover the pool, lock the gate and put away the pool supplies and equipment.

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

Interior Things:

If you still haven't insulated your pipes, now's a perfect time.

Add shades & draperies on the windows. Or mylar reflective film around sliders and French doors.

Insulate above the attic hatch or pull down stairs. This can save \$\$\$ instantly.

Insulate crawl space foundations walls and add vapor barriers over dirt floors.

Check that fire extinguishers still have a charge and put together a storm emergency kit for your home.

And when you're done with this list, feel free to suggest a few more by calling into the show when we are on the air...

Wintertime is Carbon Monoxide Time ! 7 Things to do to avoid problems ...

1. Have your heating equipment checked professionally. Annual tune-ups and service can eliminate leaks and soot. A poorly operating water heater, boiler or furnace can waste energy, burn poorly and make you sick.
2. Check the battery in your CO alarm. We recommend a new 9 volt battery at least once a year.

3. If the alarm is over 5 years old it may be time for a new module or a totally new unit.
4. Make sure your chimneys are clean and clear. Blocked chimneys allow CO to enter the home.
5. Never grill with charcoal or bring the hibachi into the home. Avoid idling the car in the garage.
6. Avoid using Kerosene or other non-vented heaters inside without proper ventilation.
7. The best place for an alarm is near the sleeping areas- to wake you up!

Are You Listening?

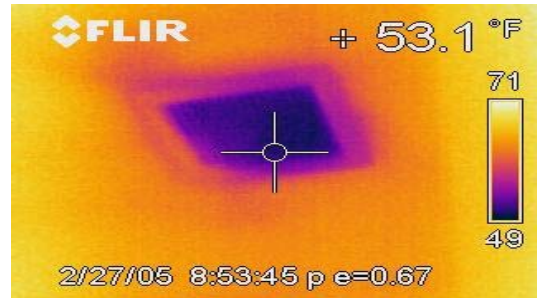
Tune in WSTC 1400 am and WNLK 1350 am or listen to us on www.stonehollow.com on the radio archive page, and hear us on your computer! Steve, Matt and Mark are on the air Saturday mornings on "Around the House" from 8 to 9 am. We discuss home issues, safety and maintenance needs. Sandi Gladstone will often give an update on the local Real Estate world... And YOU can call in and speak to us. 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.



Steve practices with the Infrared Camera during training in Massachusetts...

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.



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**. **All our inspectors are Members of ASHI.**

Fall/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.

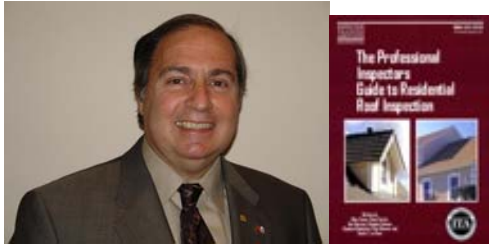
Use ceiling fans so they circulate the heat back down onto you.

Do not heat your home with ovens and cooktops. Children can get burnt or scalded.

Watch combustibles that are close to fireplaces.

If you use a central humidifier- clean it weekly.

Wear sweaters to keep your personal body heat from escaping.



Steve Gladstone, Author

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



The Professional Inspector's Guide to Residential Appliance Inspection

Price: **\$49.95 plus Tax & Shipping**

The Great House Project...

As I walk around my house we are thinking about several projects for winter. We've been getting quotes on a generator to avoid power outtages and having some interior areas wallpapered and painted. Winter projects can help to make you feel better about your home. Some good winter tasks might include: kitchen and bath renovations, painting, re-caulking or hanging artwork in a new location. Find things

that please you, that don't require opening windows or require lots of ventilation.

I'm ready for a fire in the fireplace: my chimney is clean, the firewood is stacked off the floor outside under an overhang and I have kindling and newspapers in a box near the fireplace. If only I could find some matches...



When was the last time you looked into the fireplace area to make sure there isn't an animal living in there, or to see if the damper is in the proper position.

www.stonehollow.com

e-mail us at:

steve@stonehollow.com

Some Photos from the field:



In your basement we want to see the insulation with the vapor barrier facing up. (Towards the living space.)



Heating systems over 30 years old ? Time to start budgeting for the new one. While older units may work, they cannot hold a candle to newer higher efficiency units. Most furnaces have a life expectancy of 15 -20 years. Most Boilers: 20-30, Water Heaters: 7-12 All heating systems should be checked annually by a competent service technician.

Home Safety 2006:

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. I recently spoke a senior group & have several others booked shortly to stress 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.



Broadcasting Live at the 2006 Oyster Festival are (l-r) Steve, Nick Evans, Matt and Mark

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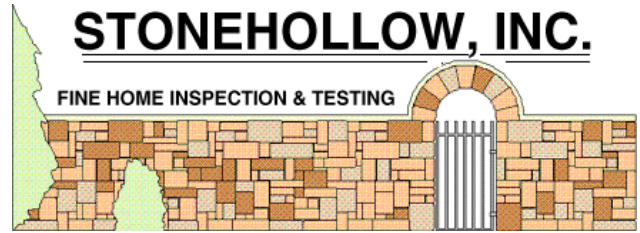
Address Correction, Please, If this newsletter reaches you in error and you want it to stop (or you want it in your name) please e-mail us at: steve@stonehollow.com and we will fix it! Thanks!

Did you know...? Energy audits were big in the 70's and 80's but have lost favor among consumers for the past few years. This year consumers are looking at efficiency and oil and gas prices with much more concern .(\$\$\$)

Thermal Imaging Technology can tell you exactly where the insulation is missing... call for a quote.

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