

# THE HELPFUL HOME NEWSLETTER

Issue #29

\*SPRING EDITION\*

Spring 2010

## About this newsletter:

Here is your Spring issue of the Helpful Home newsletter, from **STONEHOLLOW, Inc. FINE HOME INSPECTIONS**. I was outside this week enjoying the warm weather and thinking back to the incredible weather we have experienced over the last few months. Crazy wind and rain, trees falling and power lines down. Reading a book with a flashlight doesn't make me feel all warm and fuzzy. Many lost all the food in their freezers and some had to stick it out with friends at their homes, or in local hotels. I know the tree services have been mighty busy cutting up the monster trees that fell. Belltown Fire had over 50 runs in a 3 day period and Turn of River Fire had over 150! Thank you to all the volunteers who left home to help their neighbors. To those who had flooded basements, I hope you were able to get them dry quickly. If you've been reading my newsletters for a long time you know I'm just crazy about Spring. It always makes me happy to think that we are going into the warmer time of the year and we will be watching all the new sprouts and flowers budding up and blooming. Spring is so optimistic. It's easy to take a step back from all the hustle and bustle and just sit on the front steps and enjoy reading the newspaper. I can't wait for the smell of cut grass and someone cooking on the grill outside! This issue we have some consumer tips, some thoughts about ticks to prevent Lyme disease, and a spring checklist to keep your home ready for grilling & chilling. We'll remind you that we are always available to answer your questions on the radio or on the telephone and should you need our inspection or environmental testing services we hope you will contact us so we can prove that we are the best looking inspectors in Fairfield County!

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.



## Spring Helpful Home Check List:

### Exterior Stuff:

**Rooftops:** After all that wind and rain you would think the gutters and drains would be spotless...alas mine were just full of leaves and debris. Have someone clean the gutters and make sure the leaders are free of gunk. Extend the leader drains so they flow away from the foundation. Many homes we inspect have the drains placing rain water on the driveway and the walks... this is a mistake.

Have a tree person look at your bigger trees to cut down dead or damaged limbs.

Walk around your home and look for any trim or siding damages you may have missed. Sometimes getting the smaller details fixed will avoid bigger costs later.

Uncover the firewood, and let it breathe. Keep it up on a stand or ring to keep it dry. Throw away rotted wood.

**Hose bibs, spigots, faucets:** Turn them on slowly after their winter hibernation and look for leaks. Add new gaskets to hose couplings and put up the hose reels where they will be easy to use.

### 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 or they will be chirping at 2am (Murphy's law!).**

### Interior Things:

**Spring cleaning time... clean the windows and screens, lubricate the sashes and make sure locks and latches are working easily. Dust the window frames and launder the drapes, blinds, shutters etc. Asthma levels may climb among children but we need focus on reducing irritants that can contribute to the problem. Get rid of those stuffed animals and other dust and mold collectors.**

**Warm air furnaces double as air conditioners in summer... change those filters regularly. Smokey says, "only you can prevent dirty filters".**



**Warm weather means working outside, have you prepared for it?**

1. Take a few moments to stretch. Swing those arms around bend those knees, get your body

loosened up 'cause if you don't , you'll be hurtin' even worse tonight!

2. Go over to Karp's Hardware and get yourself a nice clean pair of yard gloves. Why take the chance of getting poison ivy or big blisters . Surround your hands with some well deserved comfort..
3. Clean and sharpen your tools. In this "disposable world we live in we've forgotten that a moment to sharpen a blade might save you half the effort of doing the job.
4. Lubricate as you go. Opening windows for the season. Get some spray lube into the tracks, on the sashes or around the wheels.
5. Wrap the lally column on the garage support post with carpet padding to reduce car dings.
6. As you clean the gutters add Flow Free Leaf guards to the gutters and you'll never have to do this job again!
7. Place new batteries in the garage touch pads and remotes in your car. Don't wait for the battery to die in a rain storm.
8. Look at the tire on the wheelbarrow... does it need air? I just bought one with a solid rubber wheel and metal handles.
9. Fresh gasoline in the mowers, blowers and wackers makes quite a difference.
10. Clean the lawn furniture before you sit on them and get sap, mold and gook on yourself. Gently power washing or using a car wash brush makes the job go easier.
11. Take breaks and vary your tasks and if you use any herbicides, pesticides or strong chemicals be sure to frequently wash your hands.
12. Oh did I mention sunscreen? Yikes.



**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. People ask us why you are different from other inspectors. Why are our prices different...? Well you do indeed get what you pay for... We work only for you. We are not there to sell you a home but feel comfortable that home is the right one for you. We go on every roof that is safe to climb, we inspect all the appliances, we test as many outlets and windows as we can... not just one in each room. We include termite inspections and have a Supervisory license to show our commitment to thoroughness. We get in the attics and crawlspaces whenever possible and our reports are relevant, clear and useful to you as an owner's manual for your home. We give you a checklist for your closing inspection and a home improvement/maintenance book to help you stay smart about your home. We never cut corners, nor do we leave the inspection unless you are satisfied we have done the job beyond your expectations. And we provide free telephone consultation forever.

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

**Energy Audits:** Home cooling can be costly and a comprehensive audit can save you money. 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 Summer 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.



We have found so many subtle areas that are leaking energy it's amazing. You can pay us now and stop the loss or pay C.L. & P. monthly forever...

**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. Be careful with companies offering energy audits as many "experts" have only a weeks worth of training and the screw-ups are costly.**

**Spring Tips:**

The number one area to spray for deer ticks is the rough areas of your property... not the manicured lawn. When working or wandering in the rough areas be careful not to pick up ticks on your clothing. A full body check including your scalp is called for when you spend the day doing yard work.

Deer like flowers and shrubs... yes, not a big revelation but they do not like cayenne powder, and some other spices and smells. Lenny Scinto from Designs by Lee recommends alternating different deer deterrent sprays so they do not get used to any particular one.

Playground equipment often rusts, gets beat up by the weather and wood finishes deteriorate. Powerwash these with clean water then stain them to match the original finish. If the hardware is tired go buy new swings etc. for safety and to protect the kids from dry and brittle materials.

Each spring I make a big deal about reflective numbers or at least visible ones on your home. It's absolutely frustrating to respond to emergency calls to find the numbers are not visible on a particular home. Stamford Fire and Rescue Chief Robert McGrath reminds everyone it's the law to make sure your home is well marked. Remember, It could be you that is waiting for that emergency vehicle to arrive.

I know it's a little thing but you know those gaskets that belong in the hose and the garden nozzle? They get old and crack then the hose leaks. It only takes a second to replace ... just think of the water you will save.

Do you remember to close the umbrella when you are not using the backyard table? I'm still cleaning up the glass from the last wind storm where the top shattered. I wasn't surprised that a new glass top costs more than the whole table originally cost.



Spring is here, and we are getting the soil ready for the vegetable garden.

## The Great House Project...

Sandi really wants the patio project to get going. She wants concrete pavers to neaten up the backyard. I've been transplanting small trees and shrubs. I'm thinking about some touch up painting on the exterior and once again trying to outwit the horrible "bamboo like" weed that grows so high and fast around my property. Although most of the projects are not too big I'm feeling tired just telling you about them! Ah spring! The girls from the Legacy Project were on the radio show recently. They are interviewing my father-in law and making a book and cd about his 96 years. He's having a great time telling war stories and Rozanne and Suzanne are preparing for a photoshoot for a big party bash we are planning for him... for more info about doing a project for a loved one, [www.thelegacyprojectusa.com](http://www.thelegacyprojectusa.com)



Also on the radio we were visited by the gang from Habitat for Humanity- Marie Orsini-Rosen, Eileen Bakos, Ellen Quinn and Keith Cook all took turns on the mike with Steve to explain the affordable housing project that is happening on West Main Street in Stamford.



Steve, Keith, Eileen & Marie



Need to contact us? 203-327-6824 or visit us at

**[www.stonehollow.com](http://www.stonehollow.com)** , **[E-mail us at: 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 Seniors 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 for any questions.***

## **Some Photos From the Field:**



We need to take the panel covers off whenever possible to see wire conditions & deterioration.



Sometimes it just jumps out at us... termites have been snacking on this 2x4 for many years...

## **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 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.*

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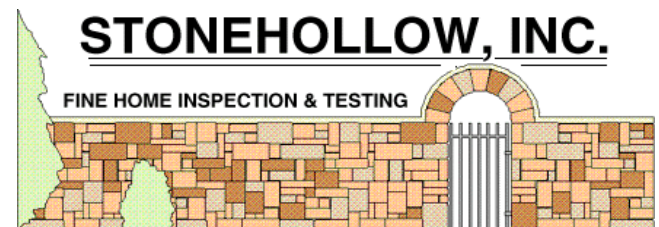
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