

THE HELPFUL HOME *NEWSLETTER*

Issue #30

SUMMER EDITION

Summer 2010

About this newsletter:

Here is your Summer issue of the Helpful Home newsletter, from



STONEHOLLOW, Inc. FINE HOME INSPECTIONS. Hot & sticky. I was thinking this week, what a truly incredible thing air conditioning is. I'm old enough to remember many a hot summer night lying in bed wishing for some temperature relief. I remember the movie theatres in New York advertising that they were "refrigerated", it was so cool inside. The bells ringing from the ice cream truck often meant we'd cool off with a little bit Good Humor and then back to our games of tag and capture the flag, playing in the streets of Long Island. Today as I watched my grandkids running through the sprinkler I enjoyed a moment of Summer. Summer smells of backyard barbecues, fresh cut grass and of the dog being sprayed by the skunk... I do admit Summer is the most fun. It's still been crazy with Tornados in Bridgeport, Train derailments in Stamford, Police Officers & City Employees being arrested...and a great BFD block party, but "around the house" the buzz is all about gardening and vegetables. Sandi's victory garden of last year has grown into a small farm with all kinds of vegetables growing day by day. These hot days I know that my wife is out there watering, nurturing and perpetually weeding. The garden gives everyone hope and optimism even though the economy is still sluggish & real estate is in the doldrums. This issue of the Helpful Home News is all about fun and 'staycations'. We have included a summertime checklist and some tips on cleaning up those summertime stains. Also: a small lesson in pool safety, some warnings about summer health concerns, and the famous anti-skunk potion that may save your sanity when you or your pet has an altercation with that

critter roaming your yard. 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 Summer is all about having fun. Steve Gladstone

Stonehollow 800-356-9611

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

Summer Helpful Home Check List:

Exterior Stuff:

Roof tops: Don't think for a minute Summertime won't fill your gutters with leaves and debris. Gutters need cleaning regularly and gunk that clogs the drains should be removed before rain backs them up and causes them to overflow. Too much water around the foundation will have you wishing for sump pumps and waterproofing. Keep them clean..

I'm having a tree person take down some damaged trees in the yard. It's amazing how many limbs come crashing down during these wind storms that could have been safely removed earlier.

Summer is a great time to examine your siding for damage and to evaluate how the paint or stain is doing.

Power washing really can clean up your home but be careful, new lead laws apply to homeowners with homes built before 1978 that have lead in the paint. You may wish to test the paint before you are accused of creating a neighborhood environmental hazard. Contractors in CT must take a lead awareness course and be certified to do lead testing and renovations that involve lead. See www.epa.gov.

Hose bibs, spigots, faucets: Check out the little gaskets that go into the female hose ends. If they are old and damaged replace them. They are very inexpensive. Hose ends damaged? Cut the end off and go to Karp's Hardware for new ends (bring the old end for a perfect size match).

Pool safety: Summer is the time for above ground pools and running through the sprinkler... but new inflatable water slides and such are now popular in the back yard as well. Consider some common sense safety ideas to better protect your kids...

Add a fence around all pools. Even the least expensive deer fencing can stop kids from getting to an unsupervised pool and keeps them in the pool area when it is supervised.

Consider locking pool entry gates in addition to latching at night and when you are away.

Completely remove or lock above ground pool ladders in the up position when not in use and at night.

Don't let kids supervise kids unless they are trained in CPR and emergency first aid.

Always have a charged cell phone in the pool area in case emergency aid is required. Fast thinking can bring help almost immediately.

Watch inflatables and pool toys as they can block the view of a child in distress.

Don't let kids stay in the pool too long and remember sunscreen 30 minutes before exposure.

Maintain pool chemicals and the ph levels. Nighttime filtration and adding chemicals work the best.

Pool alarms and chimes that tell adults someone has entered the pool area can save lives.

Keep pets out of the pool area to avoid damage & protect the pet.

Interior Things:

Summer reminder: Warm air furnaces double as air conditioners in summer... change those filters regularly.

Paddle fans and room fans can move air conditioned air and help balance comfort levels.

Try to empty dehumidifiers regularly to glean the full benefit, for a drier basement or crawl.

Clean dryer lint out of the vent flapper and tubing. Dryers are the most energy inefficient appliance you own... use these sparingly.

Insulate basement cold water piping to avoid condensate dripping & moisture.

Stains of Summer- Solved!

BBQ, Picnics and Tailgate Stain Solutions

Mustard

- Pre-treat the stain with heavy-duty liquid detergent. Rinse. Soak fabric in dilute solution of all-fabric powdered bleach. If stain persists and garment is white or colorfast, soak entire garment in diluted solution of liquid chlorine bleach and water. Chlorine bleach may change the color of the garment or cause irreversible damage. Check for bleach tolerance on a hidden seam. If stain does not come out in 15 minutes of bleaching, if cannot be removed by bleaching.
- If bleaching is not safe or does not work, use a commercial color remover according to package directions. Note that color remover will take out the fabric color as well as the stain. Do not exceed 160 degrees Fahrenheit water with any synthetic fabrics*. Launder.

Watermelon

- Soak for 15 minutes in mixture of one quart lukewarm water, one-half teaspoon liquid hand dishwashing detergent and one tablespoon white vinegar. Rinse.
- Sponge with rubbing alcohol, using light motions from center to edge of stain.

- Soak for 30 minutes in one quart warm water with one tablespoon enzyme presoak products.
- If color stain remains, launder in chlorine bleach if safe for the fabric, or in oxygen bleach.

Sweet corn, Macaroni salad, Mayonnaise, Potato salad, Vegetable dip, Cole slaw, & Brownies

- Saturate area with pretreatment laundry stain remover (aerosol types work better on greasy stains) Wait one minute for product to penetrate the stain. For stubborn stains, rub with heavy-duty liquid detergent. Launder immediately.
- If color stain remains, soak/wash in chlorine bleach if safe for fabric, or in oxygen bleach.
- For extra heavy stains, apply dry cleaning solvent to back of the stain over absorbent paper towels. Let dry, rinse. Proceed as above.

Fried chicken, Hot dogs Hamburgers/Cheeseburgers *Scrape off excess material.*

- Soak for 15 minutes in mixture of 1 quart lukewarm water, one-half teaspoon liquid hand dishwashing detergent and one tablespoon ammonia.
- Rub gently from back to loosen stain.
- Soak another 15 minutes in above mixture. Rinse.
- Soak protein stain in enzyme product for at least 30 minutes. Soak aged stains for several hours. Launder.
- If color stain remains, launder, using chlorine bleach if safe for fabric, or with oxygen bleach.

Catsup, Deviled eggs, Steak sauce Barbeque sauce, Flavored potato chips

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- For extra heavy stains, apply dry cleaning solvent to back of the stain over absorbent paper towels. Let dry, rinse. Proceed as above.

Popsicles, Lemonade & Kool-aid

- Pretreat the stain with heavy-duty liquid detergent. Rinse.
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and water. Chlorine bleach may change the color of the garment or cause irreversible damage. Check for bleach tolerance on a hidden seam.

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***Synthetic Fabrics are:** *Acetate, Acrylic, Polyester, Nylon, Olefin, Triacetate and anything labeled static-resistant, wrinkle-resistant, permanent-press, no-iron, stain-proof or moth-repellant*

Stain Solutions was developed by: Susan Taylor for Univ. Illinois Extension Extension Educator, Consumer & Family Economics DuPage County Unit
<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/stain>

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

1. Last issue we reminded you to take a few moments to stretch. Dr. Brian Nathanson recommends at least 5-10 minutes warming up before you begin the job, and I recommend two anti inflammatory pills when you're done... In between this, be careful. Don't take on too big a job or use unsafe techniques ...get help to "foot" the ladder or recruit additional manpower for the heavy jobs.
2. Tip: Tecnu Extreme Medicated Poison Ivy Scrub® can make all the difference in the world if you inadvertently get poison ivy oils on your skin. Washing quickly with this can stop the rash and itching.
3. Prune trees & shrubs close to the home. This is one of the recommendations we make constantly during home inspections. Let the sun dry the home and let the light in. Prune trees and shrubs close to the driveway and the road. This will improve exiting visibility. Explain to your kids how dangerous it could be to play close to blind spots on the drive.



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 help you to feel comfortable that the 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 for Pests). We make a commitment to thoroughness. We get in the **attics** and **crawlspaces** whenever possible, & 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 100% satisfied. **And we provide free telephone consultation forever.** We promise to help your friends with the most important purchase of their lives!

Contact us for questions, referrals of good contractors and advice. Call: 800-356-9611 or 203-327-6824 for Steve

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.



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Summer Tip:

Mosquitos will lay eggs and breed almost anywhere water is accumulating. Walking around your property and dump water found in garbage cans, wheelbarrows and trash can lids. This can eliminate egg laying conditions. Check that gutters around the home are clear and that drains do not hold water. Look in sump pits, potholes and driveway drains to see if water is sitting. If you have trees, adding bat houses can encourage the number one predator of mosquitos to feast on them in the early evening.

Sandi's Garden: *before...*



And After-



For Your Protection:

Hire only an inspector who has **experience, technical knowledge**, attends annual training & seminars and is a **Certified Member of ASHI**. Like all 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 aware many companies will cut corners to lower pricing... every cut corner could cost you money. If this house is important to you, you owe it to yourself to hire a great inspection team.

Skunked again!

The "potion" that can truly save the day!

1 quart 3% Hydrogen Peroxide
1/4 cup Baking Soda
2 tbsps Dishwashing Detergent (for sink dish-washing)

Do not bring the pet in the house as anything they rub against will smell. Let them lie down as you scrub them with the potion. It will bubble up as you are mixing what is in fact an oxygen generator and get it on the pet quickly but not in their eyes.

The Great House Project...



Here's the picture of the new pool. Safely fenced in, with a self closing gate and magnetic latch.



And, yes the kids & grandkids are having fun!

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E-mail us at: steve@stonehollow.com

Home Safety 2010:

We are promoting home safety & annual maintenance inspections. **Offering a special Seniors survey fee for homes less than 2000 sq ft. for \$350.** When we speak to senior groups & homeowner's associations we point out the importance of checking your home regularly to avoid termites, environmental issues, leaks & mold. These check-ups can nip little problems in the bud before they become expensive issues. **Call us at 203-327-6824** for any questions.

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