

Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

Realty World ~ Main Street



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Where is it? Do you know where your turn-off valves are?

Take a few minutes and reacquaint yourself and your family with the location and operation of a few home basics. It could save you time and money later.

• **Furnace** Where is it? What kind of fuel does it use? How often do you have to clean or replace the filters? Where do you get new filters? If it's an oil furnace, when do you need to refill it and whom do you call? If it goes out, who do you call to repair it? Where's the reset button?

• **Electricity** Where is the switch box (or is it a fuse box)? Which switch goes to what outlets? (Label them!) How do you turn a switch on or off?

• **Water** Where's the meter? Where's the turn-off valve inside the house (good to know in case there's a minor flood one day)? Can you turn off the outside faucets in the winter? If not, how did the previous owner (or your new neighbors) winterize the outside faucets?

Warm Up this Winter

The one room that many homeowners overlook is the bathroom, which — in the winter — can often feel like the coldest room in the house.

There are a number of ways to take the chill from your bathroom, ranging from fixes requiring a contractor, to easy-do-it-yourself ideas. Whatever your budget, here are some of the solutions that are recommended.

• Heat Up the Floors

Cold floors? No problem. Purchase some thick, plush rugs and sink your feet into warm comfort. There are hundreds of styles and colors to choose from and rugs are an inexpensive way to make your cold bathroom floor feel warmer. If you have the budget for a more extensive redo, consider installing a heated floor system. Nothing could feel better than stepping onto a warm floor on a cold morning. There are several types of heated floor systems on the market, including radiant, water heating systems, or electrical pad systems that are installed underneath a tile or stone floor. This requires the assistance of an electrical contractor and possibly a plumber, so it is best to meet with them to discuss your options and your budget.

• Heat Lamps

With the turn of a dial, you can have a powerful, heated room experience. New heat lamp technology has enabled a number of manufacturers to incorporate infrared heating technology into modern light bulbs, replacing the oversized versions of the past. These new heat lamps have a long life, provide instantaneous heating, are splash proof and are guaranteed to heat up your room — and you — when you step from the

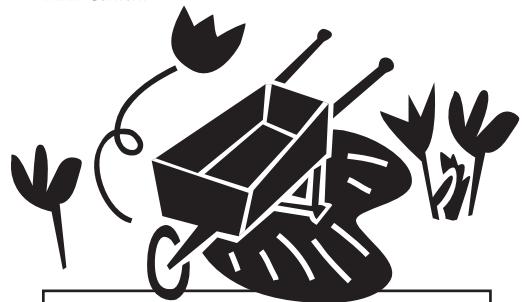
tub or shower. Speak with an electrician before installing a heat lamp to ensure safe installation.

• Heated Towel Bars

Heated towel bars are a wonderful addition to any bath. Once reserved for the rich and famous, they are much more affordable now. They are not only useful, but they can add some design flair as well. They come in a host of finishes and can be wall mounted, floor mounted, hard wired or plugged in. Once you have one you'll wonder how you ever lived without it.

Regardless of your budget, we hope you can incorporate some of these suggestions, take the chill from your bathroom and warm up this winter.

James and Morris Carey, the Carey Brothers, have been answering numerous questions on the best ways to winterize the home. www.onthehouse.com. Courtesy of ARA Content



Wondering when you should transplant trees and shrubs?
Our local landscaping "guru" advised us that it's OK to transplant in any month with an "R" in it. September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April. Never in May, June, July or August.





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Repair, Replace, Relax with Fidelity National Home Warranty (FNHW). A home warranty from FNHW provides both the home buyer and seller with "peace of mind" when it comes to repairs and/or replacement of a home's major systems and appliances. FNHW prides themselves on superior customer service, including quick response time and efficient solutions for homeowners' problems and needs. The homeowner only needs to make one call and pay one small service fee when a problem or a repair need arises.



If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the near future, please call for a personal interview and property assessment with no obligation.



This is not intended as a solicitation if your property is currently listed with another agent.
Fidelity National Home Warranty believes all information to be reliable, but assumes no legal responsibility for its accuracy.

Put the Freeze on Cold Air Drafts this Winter

Caulking is one of the quickest and easiest ways to stop air leaks around the interior of the home. The first step to a great caulking job is to choose the correct product. Most do-it-yourselfers prefer to use a water-based caulk because they are easy to use, clean up with soap and water, and provides a permanently flexible weather-resistant seal against air, moisture, dirt and dust.

Windows Frames

Small gaps and cracks around windows not only allow energy to escape from the house, but also can cause damage to your insulation and framing from dampness. Luckily, caulking around windows can tackle this temperature and water problem easily. Just be sure that the surface is clean and dry before you start caulking.

Perimeter Walls

Perimeter walls often suffer as your home shifts, creating small cracks. While they may look small and not very menacing, they are yet another culprit for cool air to sneak in and warm air out. For small cracks, just fill in with caulk.

Door Frames

Did you know that a 1/8-inch gap around two door frames can let in as much cold air as leaving a 12-inch window opened 6 inches all winter long? So be sure to check around doorframes to close any possible leaks. It is often a good idea to remove any old caulking before you start to create a more aesthetic caulk bead and to ensure a better seal.

Courtesy of ARA Content

EASY WINTER SOUP

2 teaspoons olive oil
½ medium onion, finely chopped
¼ pound smoked sausage
1 clove garlic, finely chopped, optional
2 cans (about 15 ounces each) navy beans
1 can (about 15 ounces) black beans
3 cups low-sodium, no-fat chicken broth
½ cup mild or hot tomato salsa
2 cups diced cooked turkey or chicken



Heat olive oil in heavy 3- or 4-quart pan. Stir in chopped onion and sauté over medium heat until softened, but not browned, about 3 minutes. Cut sausage into ½-inch cubes and add to onion. Continue cooking about 2 minutes. Add chopped garlic, navy beans, black beans, chicken broth and salsa. Bring just to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 5 to 10 minutes. Stir in the cooked turkey or chicken and continue cooking just until heated through, about 1-to-2 minutes.