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News on the House

Falling into Winter



COOLING DOWN

The days are growing shorter, there is a nip in the air... the signs of a winter around the corner. Keeping warm while keeping your energy bills low is important. Here are some tips, starting with some simple steps to keep your home cooler/heater in order.

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter that is full of tips and ideas for you as a homeowner. My time as a real estate professional has left me with keen insights into my clients' needs and challenges, and I want to let you know that my experience is at your disposal. Please feel welcome to talk to me about any of your real estate needs.

To ensure that you live without worries about your home or appliances, I would like to leave you with a warm note to talk to me about your home buyer protection plans.



Keep Warm, Keep Cool

Temperatures are dipping and nights are growing cooler - the perfect time for a home heating system checkup. Savings, efficiency, comfort and maintenance are all important this season. Without yearly cleaning and inspection,



a heating system can wear itself out fast.

Here are some maintenance tips to keep your system running at peak efficiency and make the seasonal transition more comfortable and cost-effective:

- Have ducts cleaned and sealed by a professional every three to five years.

- Clean or replace furnace filters about every two months.
- Use ceiling fans. They are a useful tool to keep the house warm. Heat rises and the ceiling fans push the heat back down.
- Turn down the thermostat. Homeowners can save 8 percent to 10 percent on their annual heating costs by turning the thermostat from 72 F down to 65 F at night.
- Trim or remove grass, weeds and leaves from around the outdoor heating and cooling unit. When airflow, air return and distribution vents are blocked, it puts a strain on the system and lowers efficiency.
- Use caulking or expanding spray foam to seal spaces around pipes and wires that lead from the attic or crawl space into the home.
- Place weather stripping around door frames and at the top and bottom of window sashes. Insulate attic doors and pull-downs.
- Upgrade older heating systems to optimize energy consumption. A Hybrid Heat system allows homeowners to heat their home by joining a heat pump with a gas furnace. This allows homeowners to choose between gas or electricity for their heating fuel, whichever would be more efficient for local weather and energy cost conditions.

DID YOU KNOW...

Having **the right home protection plan** helps ensure that **your home & your budget is protected.**

Call your Real Estate Professional today to find out how you can **save time and money** on home repairs.

Pickles for a snack

Looking for new and creative ways to get your kids to eat healthier after-school snacks? Try opening a jar of pickles. An afternoon snack is not just an indulgence, it is a necessity for active kids with fast metabolisms. Now offering the world's first line of USDA-certified organic pickles, Del Monte products are available in supermarkets and retail outlets offering natural and organic foods nationwide. The new organic line includes Sweet Bread & Butter Chips, Dill Burger Slices, Kosher Dill Whole Pickles, Kosher Dill Baby Pickles and Kosher Dill Spears.

Consider this quick and easy recipe for Pickle Roll-Ups. They can be prepared in advance, are simple enough for the whole family to make, and fun for kids to eat with their fingers. They make a great after-school snack as well.

Quick and EAsy Pickle Roll-Ups

- 1 jar of Del Monte Dill Baby Pickles, either traditional "Babies" or Del Monte's new organic version



- 1 8-ounce package of cream cheese at room temperature
- 3 packages of sliced deli meat, such as ham or corned beef

Spread thin layer of cream cheese on slice of meat. Wrap one pickle with cheese-covered meat slices. Chill for at least one hour, then slice rolls into wheels. The pickle will be surrounded by the cream cheese and sliced meat in bite-sized bundles.

Shoe polishing is no longer a dirty job, thanks to a new gadget that eliminates the muss and fuss.

The Buff 'n Shine polisher is a battery-operated device that features a slow-moving shoe polish applicator on one of its two heads and a fast-moving polishing brush on the other.

The device cuts polishing time in half, according to Douglas Whitner, president of Boxwood Industries in Cleveland, the product's manufacturer.

First introduced in December 2005, the Buff 'n Shine struck a chord with those who have limited time and "don't want to deal



Shoe
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with dirty rags and polish applicators," says Whitner. Buff 'n Shine is powered by AA batteries, which provide dozens of shines before needing to be replaced. It comes in a package that also includes tins of black and

brown shoe polish, replacement heads for the polishing device, and a travel kit that makes shoe care easily transportable.

The product was designed by Nottingham-Spirk Design Associates in Cleveland, which also developed the Dutch Boy plastic paint container and the Crest SpinBrush. The kit sells for approximately \$20 and is available at participating Wal-Mart stores.



**First American
Home Buyers Protection
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Does afternoon feel like a better time to nap than work? Actually, some lifestyle experts say a 15- or 20-minute "power nap" after lunch isn't a bad idea.

If you're afraid you'll sleep the entire afternoon away, set the alarm on your watch. Here are some more tips to get you through that mid-afternoon slump:

- Try to avoid foods like turkey and dairy products during the day. They're rich in the amino acid tryptophan, which can cause sleepiness.
- Take breaks. If you're working on a huge project, you'll be more productive and less tired if you take regular short breaks instead of relentlessly plowing ahead.
- Drink water. Dehydration drains energy.



**BEATING THE
AFTERNOON 'BLAHS'**

Drink a glass of water in the morning and any other time you need a pick-me-up.

- Eat complex carbs. A starchy snack like a bagel or banana will give you a quick energy boost.
- Jog in place, stretch at your desk or go for a brisk walk. Moving around will get the blood flowing and carry oxygen to the tissues, so you'll feel energized and alert.
- Get enough sleep. Most people need seven to nine hours of sleep a night to feel their best.
- Lose weight. Dragging around all those extra pounds burns up more energy than most of us have to spare.
- Look forward to something. Plan a vacation, getaway weekend or an evening out with friends. Thinking about your plans will give you the boost you need to get through a busy, stressful day.