

# Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

## Fireside Homes

### Danner F. Bierhaus

Associate Broker, MBA  
Member : Urban Land Institute



18110 Midvale Ave N.  
Shoreline, WA 98133  
Phone: 206-390-2824  
dfbierhaus@hotmail.com

"From Bierhaus To Your House"

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## July is Air Conditioner Appreciation Month!

### Maintenance Checklist

A typical maintenance check-up by a contractor should include the following:

- Check thermostat settings to ensure the cooling and heating system keeps you comfortable when you are home and saves energy while you are away.
- Tighten all electrical connections and measure voltage and current on motors. Faulty electrical connections can cause unsafe operation of your system and reduce the life of major components.
- Lubricate all moving parts. Parts that lack lubrication cause friction in motors and increase the amount of electricity you use.
- Check and inspect the condensate drain in your central air conditioner, furnace and/or heat pump (when in cooling mode). A plugged drain can cause water damage in the house and affect indoor humidity levels.
- Check controls of the system to ensure proper and safe operation. Check the starting cycle of the equipment to assure the system starts, operates, and shuts off properly.

### Cooling Specific

- Clean evaporator and condenser air conditioning coils. Dirty coils reduce the system's ability to cool your home and cause the system to run longer, increasing energy costs and reducing the life of the equipment.
- Check your central air conditioner's refrigerant level and adjust if necessary. Too much or too little refrigerant will make your system less efficient, increasing energy costs and reducing the life of the equipment.
- Clean and adjust blower components to provide proper system airflow for greater comfort levels. Airflow problems can reduce your system's efficiency by up to 15 percent.

### Actions to Do Yourself

Inspect, clean, or change air filters once a month in your central air conditioner, furnace and/or heat pump. Your contractor can show you how to do this. A dirty filter can increase energy costs and damage your equipment, leading to early failure.

For more information: [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat\\_cool.pr\\_maintenance](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat_cool.pr_maintenance)



## Summer Fun— Cooking Outdoors

No matter what time of the year, more and more people are cooking outdoors. But outdoor cooking during the summer seems to pose a few extra challenges—leaving food out for just a short period of time under the hot sun can result in harmful bacteria rapidly multiplying and it increases the chance of getting food borne illness. Here are some basic guidelines for safe food handling during the hot summer months:



### From Store to Home

- Purchase refrigerated or frozen items after you have selected all your non-perishables.
- Put raw meat/poultry in a plastic bag so juices won't cross-contaminate your fruits or vegetables.
- Immediately refrigerate all perishable items when you get home.
- Completely defrost meat/poultry, so that it cooks more evenly and doesn't leave raw or poorly cooked places.

### Transporting

- When transporting food to another location, whether on a long family trip or just a short distance to the park, it is important to keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth.
- Keep meats refrigerated until ready to use.
- Pack perishable food from the refrigerator to the cooler just before leaving and keep on ice until ready to use.
- Keep cooler out of direct sunlight and avoid opening it too often.
- Hint: Pack beverages in one cooler and foods in another.

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cfocus/cfhealthtips03/focus.htm#swimming>



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 Shoreline, WA 98133



**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 itself on superior customer service, including quick response time and efficient solutions for homeowners’ problems and needs.



*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.*



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## Top 11 Sources of Air Leaks in Your Home

Areas that leak air into and out of your home cost you lots of money. Check and seal the areas listed below:

1. Dropped Ceiling
2. Recessed light
3. Attic Entrance
4. Sill Plates
5. Water and furnace flues
6. All ducts
7. Door frames
8. Chimney flashing
9. Window Frames
10. Electrical outlets/switches
11. Plumbing/utility access

[www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/pdfs/energy\\_savers.pdf](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/pdfs/energy_savers.pdf)

## Happy Birthday America!

On July 4, 1776, we claimed our independence from England and our democracy was born. Each year on July 4th, Americans celebrate that freedom and independence with barbecues, picnics, and family gatherings.



*“We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal.”*—Thomas Jefferson

*“I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death.”*—Patrick Henry

## FIREWORKS CRUDITÉS WITH PARMESAN DIP

*Courtesy of Disney Family Fun Recipes*

### Ingredients

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 scallion, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon mustard
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

### Instructions

In a medium bowl, stir all of the ingredients until well blended.

Refrigerate until ready to use. Serve with a selection of vegetable dippers, such as sweet red pepper, broccoli florets, or carrot sticks.

Makes 1 1/2 cups.

<http://familyfun.go.com/4th-of-july/4th-of-july-recipes/4th-of-july-snacks-treats/fireworks-crudites-with-parmesan-dip-688001/>