

Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

Fireside Homes



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May is Deck Safety Month. Is Your Deck Safe?

As spring approaches, thoughts turn to sprucing up the yard, the garden, and spending more time outdoors. Part of gearing up for this time of year is making sure your deck is safe and well-maintained.

In an effort to save lives and prevent injuries, the North American Deck and Railing Association, Inc. (NADRA) declared May as Deck Safety Month in 2006. The Deck Safety Month program helps increase public awareness of the necessity for regular inspection and maintenance of existing decks, and proper installation of new decks.

Reasons for a deck collapsing can range from age of the deck, poor maintenance and exceeding load capacity to improper building methods. Deck failures can be avoided. It's a matter of making the consumer aware of the necessity of choosing a professional deck contractor, regular maintenance and inspection, and knowing the limits of the deck structure.

10-Point Safety Checklist

Homeowners should visit NADRA's website at www.nadra.org for the Check Your Deck—10-Point safety checklist.

Courtesy of ARAcotent

Save Money and Improve Air Quality with HVAC Cleaning

The heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is crucial to ensure a comfortable temperature, fresh airflow, and an overall healthy indoor environment. But over time, these systems can get dirty or damaged, reducing indoor air quality and efficiency, hitting your health and energy bill hard.

Here's what you need to know:

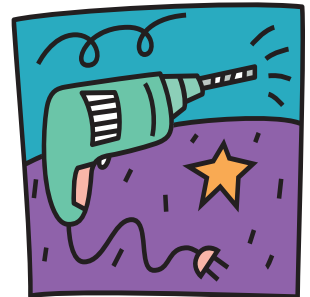
- **Filtration Issues:** Low-efficiency filters, lack of a filter replacement program, and improperly sized filters can allow particles and debris to flow into a home. The age of the system is also a factor.
- **Duct Work Contamination:** One of the most underreported problems in HVAC system maintenance is the deterioration of the insulation duct liner. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of HVAC systems installed over 10 years will have some level of insulation deterioration.
- **Dirty Evaporator Coil:** Over time, evaporator coils become matted with dust and dirt, which insulates the coil and significantly reduces the system's ability to cool the air. This system will work longer and harder and energy costs will increase.

Cleaning your HVAC system regularly will improve indoor air quality, air flow, efficiency and thermal comfort. A proper cleaning includes the elimination of all visible debris and particles from all components of a ventilation system. The National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) has published an internationally recognized standard that specifies requirements for proper cleaning. For more information visit www.NADCA.com.

Thinking of Hiring a Contractor?

Talk with some of the contractor's former customers. They can help you decide if a particular contractor is right for you. You may want to ask:

- Can I visit your home to see the completed job?
- Were you satisfied with the project? Was it completed on time?
- Did the contractor keep you informed about the status of the project, and any problems along the way?
- Were there unexpected costs? If so, what were they?
- Did workers show up on time? Did they clean up after finishing the job?
- Would you recommend the contractor?
- Would you use the contractor again?



May 11th is Mother's Day

May 17th is Armed Forces Day

May 26th is Memorial Day

However you decide to celebrate this important day, be sure to stop and remember the men and women who fought to protect our freedom.





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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 itself 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.

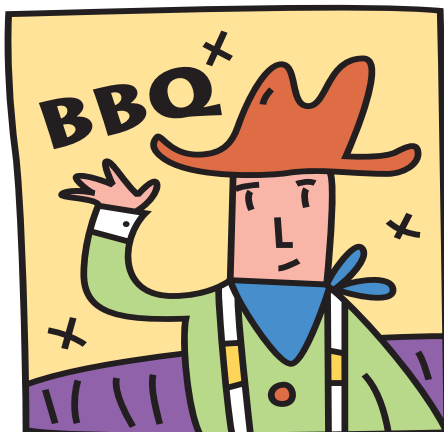


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First Class Postage Goes up to 42 cents May 12, 2008

On May 12 the USPS will adjust prices for mailing services—First-Class Mail, Standard Mail, Periodicals, Package Services, and Special Services. The average increase by class of mail is at or below the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

A First-Class Mail stamp will be 42¢. Customers can continue to use the Forever Stamps that they purchased prior to May 12 at 41¢, even after the price change. The USPS will have 5 billion Forever Stamps in stock to meet increased demand before the price change. Forever Stamps are widely available through Post Offices, Contract Postal Units, consignment locations, Automated Postage Centers, vending, and at The Postal Store®.



Celebrate Memorial Day and Kickoff the Barbecue Season

There could be no more fitting way to celebrate Memorial Day than with a cookout!

Spend the afternoon hanging around the food table at your house, backyard or friend’s houses. Get ready to warm up the coals, pull out the cooler! Make the most out of your day off.

GARLIC MARINATED STEAKS

- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon liquid smoke flavoring

In a medium bowl, combine the vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, honey, oil, ground black pepper, Worcestershire sauce, onion powder, salt and liquid smoke. Place steaks in a shallow, non-porous dish and pour the marinade over the steaks. Rub the liquid into the meat for optimum flavor. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 24 to 48 hours. Preheat an outdoor grill for medium high to high heat and lightly oil grate. Grill steaks for 7 to 8 minutes per side, or until internal temperature reaches at least 145°F.

