

WESTCHESTER LIVING

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Also in this issue: A Look at Real Estate and More Local Athletes in Our Spotlight



EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR

Show your home a little extra LOVE this month!

By Amy Nelson Frelinger

I have literally attended hundreds of home inspections for clients buying and selling real estate across the past 17 years. Thought I'd share this Realtor's perspective on the recurring conditions that can jeopardize your home's value when left unattended. During this month of affection, would it be impossible to show your HOME some LOVE this February by checking on and fixing some of these things?

On the outside:

Clear things away from your house and fence lines. Often piles of wood or debris can be found stacked against the side of the house or fences. These attract rodents, termites, wood destroying pests, mold and mildew and other unwanted conditions. By simply keeping things off your house and fences, the stucco, siding or wood materials of your home will last longer and remain in better condition for the long haul.

Sweep curbs, street gutters and driveways to allow rain water and sprinkler runoff to drain properly. Pooling water can breed mosquitos, cause decay and bring disease.

Evaluate the mesh covered openings of your house. On a raised foundation home, these can be found in high and low locations. At ground level these mesh vents are designed to allow air to circulate in the crawl space under your home. Up high, under the eaves of the roof, the mesh vents allow

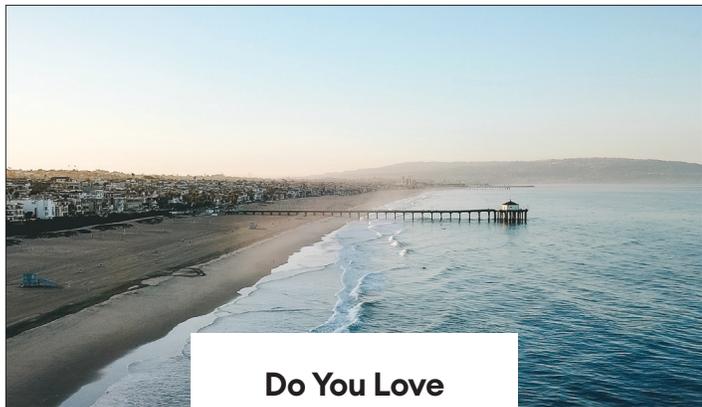
for air circulation in your attic spaces. When these mesh vents get bent, broken or removed, often we find pests who enter uninvited AND without paying rent! In fact, in a recent property inspection, thanks to a missing vent cover, there was a family of raccoons living under the house. We've found birds nesting in the chimney, rats partying in the attic or under the house. The mesh vents are very affordable and worth every dollar invested, I promise.

Roofs are expensive to replace. Roof maintenance is valuable. Often tree branches overhang or lay on top of the roof which can shorten the life of the roof. Remove overhanging branches and clean away leaves when they pile up to avoid deterioration of your roofing materials.

Check the roof eaves for nests or cobwebs. Wasps often find roof eaves to be a perfect location to build their hives. In fact, wasp nests are made from chewed wood which is what gives them their distinctive papery walls. The sooner you remove such nests, the better.

On the inside:

Consider and clean ALL the filters in your home. These include: HVAC (heating ventilation air conditioning) systems, water filtration systems, dryer vents and central vacuum systems. The exchange of hot or cold air is processed through HVAC filters to control temperature, humidity



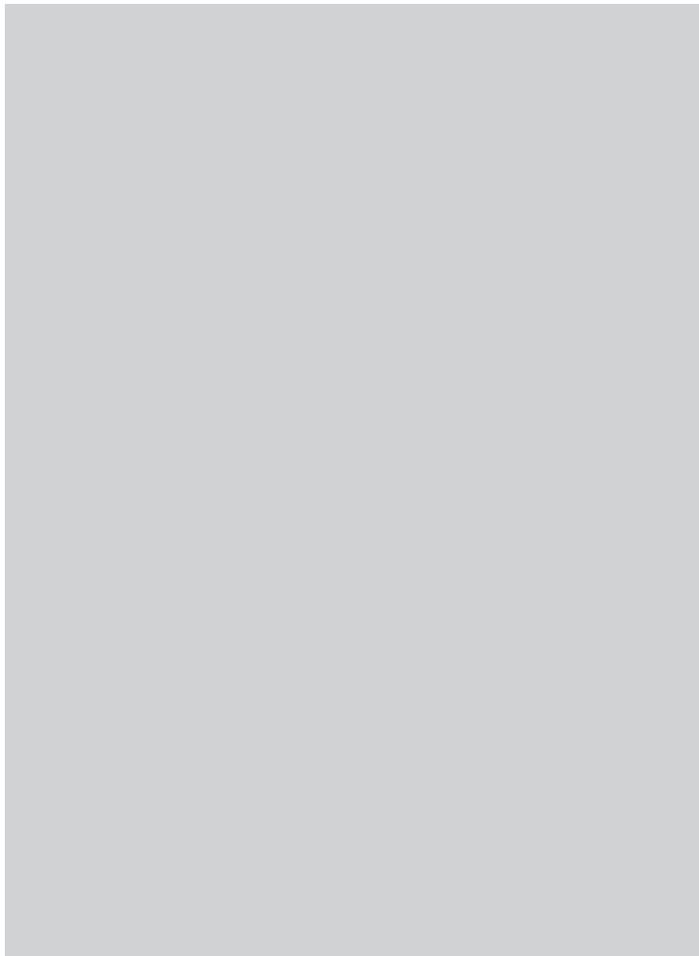
**Do You Love
Where You Live?**

If you've been thinking of selling,
now could be the time to make a move.
Looking to trade up or trade out?

Call me, let's discuss.



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and purity of the air in your home. When filters are dirty, the quality of it all is compromised. Filters are very affordable and take little time and inconvenience to replace them. Google it – it's easy. Water filtration systems also have filters that need changing at intervals to guarantee the water is as clean as you want it. As for dryer vents, find where the ducting leads to the outside of your home. Then find the plastic louvered vent. Clean it of any accumulated fibers from clothing, linens and other textiles. Recently, I had an inspection where every dryer vent was installed incorrectly for all the units in a condo complex. The vent pipe went UP to the roof rather than down with gravity's natural assistance. The vent pipe was completely clogged with lint so the dryer could no longer function properly to dry clothing. Again, an easy fix to improve your appliance functionality. If you have a central vacuum system, there is a centralized canister where all the lint, hair and debris accumulates. Be sure to check the canister often depending upon how much dirt and animal hair you are collecting every time you vacuum.

Evaluate your kitchen appliances for cleanliness. Refrigerators, dishwashers, microwaves, ovens, stoves, washer/dryer units, etc. There are all kinds of cleaning products available for various kinds of household needs. There are also plenty of organic ways to clean with less toxicity. Often a solution of baking soda, vinegar and dish soap plus water can act very effectively in many grimy situations. Check the edges of the appliances where dirt, grease, cobwebs and gunk can gather. Wipe down the gaskets of your refrigerator and freezer to ensure they seal properly to offer maximum efficiency in keeping your food at the correct temperature. Check above your cooktop or stove and wipe away any grease build-up that could cause a fire hazard.

Wash windows after the winter of rain, fog and airplane dust. Block some time (or hire someone to do this for you) to be able to see clearly through your windows. A window washing professional will include in their deep cleaning not only the windows (inside and out) but also the

screens and the window tracks. The secret to a clean window is a little bit of Dawn or Palmolive dish soap, water, a sponge and a squeegee plus that priceless elbow grease. Nothing like a crystal clean window to brighten your outlook on life and the neighborhood.

Change burned out light bulbs in light fixtures. Change the old incandescent bulbs into energy efficient bulbs. You'll brighten your home, save yourself money and be able to see things much more clearly.

Clean INSIDE your light fixtures where you may find dead bugs, moths, gnats and other surprises. If you are not sure how to remove the light fixture cover, just Google it, ask Siri or Alexa, or find the manual online.

May these tips ignite your passions to caretake your home, return you great satisfaction and delight your senses every time you come home! ♦

