

BAUER INSPECTION & CONSULTING SERVICES

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November, 2011

Maintenance Reminder Newsletter

Reminders this month are:

- Changing the batteries in your smoke alarms
- Void under your sidewalk, driveway, or Patio?
- Disconnect the hoses from your outside hydrants
- Lighting the pilot on your gas fireplace.
- Cleaning your Wood burning Fireplace
- Furnace Maintenance

My purpose is to provide timely information to help you maintain your house. Most of it is maintenance or preventive maintenance. Simple things that you can and should do around the house to better maintain your property. Although many of these things are simple to do, we often just need a reminder to do them. And that's what this newsletter is all about.

Some of you are first time home buyers and are not familiar with all of the systems and requirements of the house and its components. I'll try to explain why we want to provide these maintenance services to our homes, and the possible consequences if we don't.

Please feel free to pass on your comments regarding the inspection and this newsletter. Your feedback will help me to improve my services to you and my future clients.

**Taking care of your house makes sense,
"Because it's where you live"**

Most of my business comes from referrals. I would appreciate your sharing my name with anyone you know that might also be buying a house. Feedback to your Realtor about your inspection, report, and this newsletter is also appreciated.

November, 2011

We recently went off Daylight Savings Time, so now is the time to change the batteries in your Smoke Alarms. Most Smoke Alarms are either battery operated or hard wired to all of the smoke alarms in the house with battery back-up.

Houses built since 1997 probably have smoke alarms in “EACH LIVING AREA AND EACH BEDROOM”. All smoke alarms that have batteries should have the battery changed now.

If your house does not have smoke alarms in each bedroom, we encourage you to add them.

Some Smoke Alarms have slide out drawers or doors,



And some you have to remove from the mounting to replace the battery in the back..
All Smoke Alarms use 9 volt batteries



If you think the batteries in your smoke alarms are still OK, I suggest that you change them anyway, and use these used batteries for the keyless entry to your garage door opener, or some other gadget around the house.

If the Garage door fails when you try to use it, it's no big deal.
If your Smoke Alarm fails when you need it, it IS a big deal.

Don't take a chance.

November, 2011

Have a Void under your Sidewalk, Driveway or Patio?

If you have a void under your sidewalk, driveway, or patio, you should probably fill in that void to prevent settling and to keep varmints out from under the concrete. The last thing you want getting under there is a skunk. It's really hard to get a proper fill under some of these areas. This one was about 13' to the front door.



The best way is to pump a grout into the void, usually a mixture of Portland cement and sand.
Chris Koenig of Superior Lawn Service now has a grout pump and can perform this service.



With an extension on the flexible hose, he can pump the grout all the way to the far end of the void, and then gradually withdraw the extension until the entire void is filled.



Some areas have smaller voids, that can be filled by drilling the concrete and pumping the grout through the hole and fill the void. The process is similar to mud jacking, but much less expensive. He can fill large voids and raise the concrete some, but it won't raise a driveway that's sunken 3"-4".



You can contact Chris at:

Chris Koenig
Superior Lawn Service
785 766-6456



November, 2011

It's time to disconnect your hoses from the outside hydrants.

Most houses have Freeze-Proof faucets for the exterior water faucets. I refer to them as the 'hose bibb'. They are "freeze-proof", but ONLY if they are used properly.

That means that all hoses and attachments **MUST** be removed before a hard freeze.



Some of these extend into the house in the basement and some are in the wall. The faucet is "Freeze-Proof" because the water shuts off way back into the faucet tubing, which is actually back inside the warm house.



The actual water shut off is 12" to 14" back into the house from the outside wall, where the arrows indicate.



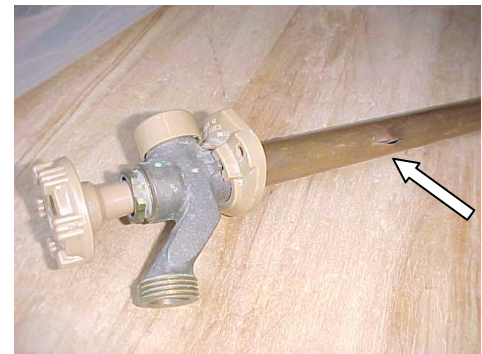
When you shut the faucet off, the shut-off point is at the back of the valve, and the water in the tube drains out, and is empty.



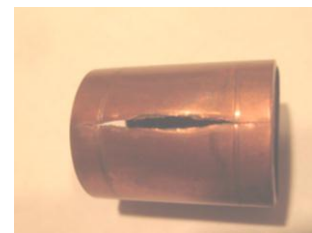
However, if you leave the hose connected, water can stay in the hose and tubing, and when it gets really cold outside, the water in the tube will freeze and expand, and can burst the valve. You won't know this until Spring when you turn on the water for the first time.



⁶ Although some water will come out of the hose, a significant amount of water will come out of the hole in the valve in the wall, and can flood your house. You won't know this right away because you're out there washing the car or watering the lawn while you're flooding your house. It can be a real mess. Besides, you can't use your hose when it's freezing outside anyway.



Here's a close-up of what happens to the copper pipe when it freezes.



Please remove the hoses before we get into the really cold weather. They PROBABLY won't freeze up until the temperature gets below 20° for several days, but do you want to take a chance?

I'll remind you again in the December newsletter, but I suggest you do it now.

November, 2011

Gas Fireplaces Lighting the Pilot

Many newer houses have the fireplace insert with the gas logs and the wall switch to operate the fireplace. They have a 'standing' pilot; that is, a pilot that is lit all of the time. You only need this pilot in the colder months when you might use the fireplace.



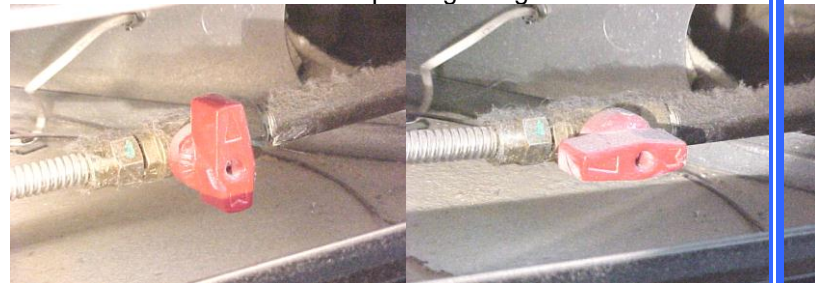
We recommend that you turn off the pilot during the months that you will not be using the fireplace, and then re-light it in the fall.



Fireplace gas log controls.

Probably turn it off in March and back on in November.

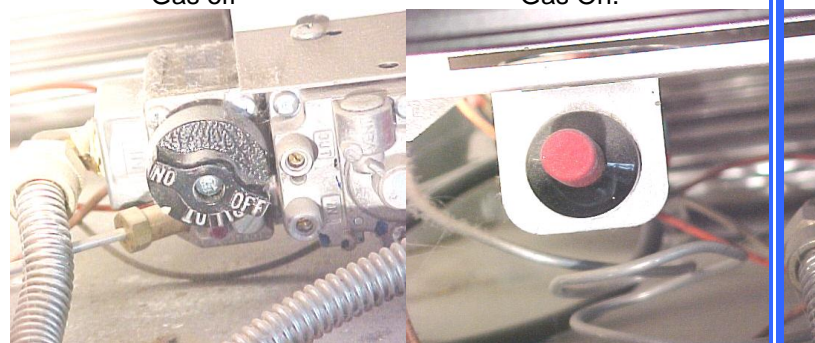
When you're ready to light the pilot, turn the gas valve ON as shown. When the RED knob is in-line with the pipe, the Gas is ON.



Gas off

Gas On.

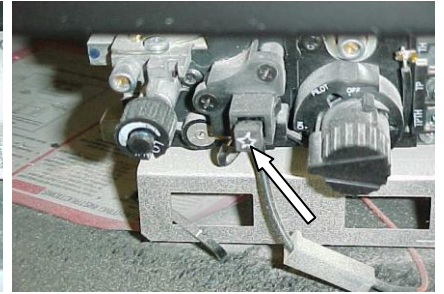
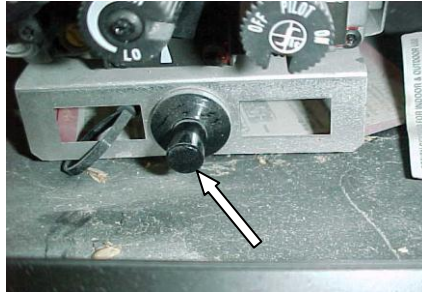
Then turn the control knob to PILOT and push it in. It won't go in until it's positioned just right. While holding it in, push the RED 'igniter' button.



Knob at pilot

Igniter button

On some fireplaces, the igniter button is BLACK, and on some it's a square button with a "spark" icon on it.



Pushing the igniter button will cause a spark and should light the pilot. If it doesn't, continue holding the knob in and continue to push the red igniter button. Within 4 or 5 tries it should light the pilot.

Sometime when the gas is OFF for a long period, it is necessary to hold the control knob in for more than a minute to get gas up to the valve. Apparently, some of the gas can leak out over a 6-8 month period.

With the pilot light on, continue holding the Pilot knob in for about 20-30 seconds to allow the thermocouple to heat up. When sufficiently heated, it will stay lit when you finally release the knob. Then turn the knob to 'ON', and the fireplace is ready to light by the wall switch.



Knob on



Lit fireplace

Some houses have another shut off valve for the gas to the fireplace in the garage or basement, as the gas line comes off the main supply line near the Furnace or water heater. If your fireplace doesn't light after holding the gas valve in for a full minute, you might want to check in the basement to see if that valve is shut OFF.



If your fireplace Glass panel looks like this, you might want to clean it. Different fireplace has different mechanisms for securing the glass panel.

If you need help, you might want to call John Wade at "**The Fire Place**" at 785 749-2529.

His Service Call will not only clean the glass but show you how to do remove it for cleaning, and tune up your fireplace if necessary.



The Fire Place
540 Fireside Ct. Ste B
Lawrence, KS

(Next to The Pella Window
Store)

November, 2011 Wood burning Fireplace?

If you have a wood burning fireplace, you might want to consider having it cleaned by a Chimney Sweep.



I try to burn mostly Oak in my fireplace, and have it cleaned every 2-3 years.



How often really depends on the type of wood you and how much wood you burn.



If you have an insert and the back ceramic panel is cracked.....



they can provide a Stainless Steel plate to protect the back of your firebox.



It's best to get your chimney cleaned in the off season when it's not real busy, but you can still get it cleaned now,

We have two really good chimney sweeps in the Lawrence area.

Steve Grammar Soot's Me	Chimney Sweep	785-594-6792 785-842-5348
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Allen Clough 20 th Century Chimney Sweep	Chimney Sweep	841-0123
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November, 2011

HVAC Maintenance.

During the inspection, I probably told you that the best money you can spend on your house is to properly maintain your filter.

I might have also said that the second best money you can spend is to have a maintenance contract (Service Agreement) with an HVAC contractor to come out each fall (now) to clean and service the furnace, and then again in the spring (April or May) to service and clean the Air Conditioner.



During the many inspections I have performed in the past 27 years, I have consistently seen Furnaces and Air Conditioners that have been in very good condition that have been in a maintenance program from their beginning. And not surprising, I find very few deficiencies in these units. This furnace was 26 years old, has had annual maintenance, was very clean, looked good and passed inspection recently.



With proper maintenance, they operate more efficiently, use less gas, stay cleaner, last longer, and most important to me, are more dependable. I don't want my furnace breaking down in January when it's 10° outside and 47° inside.

Just a suggestion to help you get more out of your house.