



### What if everything we knew about homes came from HGTV? – by Mark Koestner

It draws you in; there's no doubt. It's addicting, really. You say you're only going to watch one show — one half-hour increment — but it never works out that way.

One half-hour show turns into two, then maybe three. It's the dangerous allure of HGTV. It works because we're all curious about other people's homes. And it works because our short attention spans eat up being able to see weeks and months worth of projects that we need only spend 30 minutes to digest.

And it's safe to say we've all probably learned a thing or two about homes and real estate from watching HGTV.

But what if ALL we knew about homes came from HGTV? What if our entire homeownership education was dispensed in those half-hour class room sessions we watch?

For one, we'd believe real estate agents are all snobby know-it-alls.



They'll tell you what your home is worth. They'll tell you how much money you're going to recoup from that kitchen remodel. They'll tell you to tone down paint color on the walls, tell you to have double vanities in your master bath and to plant flowers out front.

Unless you're a first-time buyer, of course — "Property Virgins" as HGTV likes to call you. Then agents will just talk to you like you're 9 years old and have never purchased anything before in your life. Ever.

If HGTV were the only real estate education you had, you'd know that de-cluttering your home is the most important step to being able to sell it.

The market? Doesn't matter. The number of bedrooms and bathrooms? Doesn't matter. The fact that you're asking waaay too much money and your home is located next to a dilapidated trailer?

Just de-clutter. Thank you, HGTV.

Also, thanks to HGTV, we know that the demolition stage of a project is easy, fast and fun when designers help



do it, like on "Designed to Sell." But it's really, really time-consuming, difficult and frustrating if homeowners try to tackle it on their own, like they do on "Renovation Realities."

If HGTV were the only place we learned about our homes, we'd all have beige walls. We know that anything else — reds, yellows, blues, greens — are all no-nos. And if you have a daughter who wants a pink room, don't give in. It will completely ruin your home's resale value. I'm sure little Sally will totally understand.

If HGTV were our only source of home knowledge, we'd all be sure that our own home is far inferior to everybody else's.

See, everybody just *has* to have stainless steel appliances. Also, your kitchen isn't truly a kitchen if you don't have granite countertops, a huge island, plenty of counter space, an eat-in area, a fancy backsplash, a wall oven, a six-burner range and a travertine floor.

The only excuse for NOT having all the above in your kitchen, of course, is if you're "going green." Then you want bamboo floors and counters made out of recycled glass bottles that wash up on the beach. The stainless appliances are still expected in your green kitchen, but they must be super high energy-efficient ones.

If HGTV were our sole educator, we'd all know how to be international house hunters.

Just find a place with a view. Ocean, mountains — just *some* view — and you'll be able to get over paying \$500,000 Euros (whatever that comes to in dollars) for your 700-square-foot, one-bedroom



apartment with turquoise blue walls and a bright orange floor in the bathroom. The right view will erase whatever qualms you might have about washing clothes in your kitchen or taking showers on the patio.

Thanks to HGTV, we know that:

- Infinity pools are awesome
- That in-between space between our kitchen and living room needs to be "defined." (By the way, there are no "rooms" in our houses, only "spaces")
- Men really like garages
- Women really like big closets
- Dogs really like back yards
- Built-in bookcases, hand-crafted fireplace mantels and any piece of furniture can be made in minutes by just about any carpenter
- The polite way to say "old and ugly" is "dated"

Of course, there are more. What an education HGTV has given us!

If you're a buyer, you know what to look for. You want beige walls, "spacious" rooms, a big yard and a gigantic kitchen. You know those tense counteroffer negotiations, a home inspection or a stubborn lender can dash your hopes that you're ever going to get your dream home.

If you're a seller, you have your lessons, too.

Just de-clutter.

**Water Main Replacement / Department of Utilities  
Emergency Notification Process – by Michelle Hribar**

On Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, the Lake County Department of Utilities performed a scheduled replacement of the water main valve on Lake Rd. Lake Erie Shores, North Shores and the Nautica developments were without water for approximately six hours while the work was being performed. As a result, all three developments were placed under a water advisory or boil alert until further testing confirmed that the water was safe for consumption.



The Department of Utilities is required to issue a water advisory or boil alert whenever the main water supply is affected in a way that could allow for potentially harmful bacteria to enter the system.

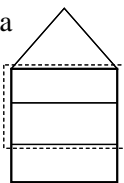
Since this was a scheduled repair, notifications were placed in the Lake County News Herald as well as the Utilities Dept. website under “News and Events” at [www.lakecountyohio.gov/utilities](http://www.lakecountyohio.gov/utilities). In addition, the county’s reverse 911 Emergency Notification System was used to alert affected households prior to the work commencing.

However, in spite of these attempts to notify the affected households, numerous residents were still unaware of the water shut off as well as the water advisory and boil alert which remained in place until approximately 4:30 pm. on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. Households which did not receive the reverse 911 call concerning the water shut off, should contact the Lake County Emergency Management System at 440-350-5499 to register their phone numbers to insure that they receive all future county-wide notices for fire/safety/water alerts, etc. In speaking with the Department of Utilities, it was suggested that in the future, they consider using signage in the affected areas, similar to the “Hydrant Flushing” signs that are visible to all residents. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the public water supply, consult the Utilities Department website which contains updated information concerning any water advisories or the cancellation of advisories once the water is deemed safe for consumption.

**Blower Door Tests – by Jim Sorenson**

Last month I discussed a home’s thermal envelope, energy efficiency and building techniques. These articles are meant to stimulate thought, so please do not take them as me stating that I am “holier-than-though”.

Can anyone operate their home all year with a total gas & electric bill of less than \$300? If not, there are still things that can be done to help improve existing homes. The building envelope is a virtual box around the living space as shown by the dashed line in the figure. The dashed line shown assumes that the living space is on the first and second floors.



There are many things that can be done to improve the building envelope, but they can be boiled down to two things: improve the thermal barrier or improve the air barrier. A good place to start is with the air barrier and air-sealing. Note that a home cannot be too “tight”; it can however be under-ventilated.

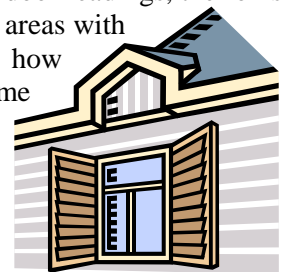
A blower door is a special door, with a built-in fan, used to quantify the sealing conditions of a home and energy audit companies provide such services. You close up all of the windows, etc. of the home, turn on the door fan, and then quantify the volumetric flow rate of air that passes through the fan. A blower door test provides metrics to quantify how “sealed” a home is, and they can also provide information such as the equivalent sized opening that would correspond to the cumulative area of the air gaps around the home. Equate this to having a specified sized window open all of the time. The bigger the equivalent area, the more money that is wasted on energy.



When I started the process of air sealing our home after we moved in, I found a 3x4-inch opening, in one of the main floor stringer joists that sits on top of the foundation wall. Someone cut the opening in the stringer joist for some reason, but it was never sealed. Someone placed fiberglass insulation (the pink blanket stuff) over the opening, but guess what, fiberglass insulation only offers a thermal barrier, it does not provide an air-barrier. When I discovered this hole in the winter, I could not believe the amount of air that was moving through the 3x4-inch opening when I placed my hand by it.

I found another big culprit in the basement with an HVAC duct that went out of the basement, through a header joist into the garage, and then up to the room over our garage. I could have easily blown out all of the candles on a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday cake with the breeze moving through that opening – it was dramatic.

After you have the initial blower door readings, the folks can go around your house in discrete areas with a smoke source, and you can watch how the smoke enters/exits your home through all of the gaps around the foundation, windows, doors, etc. – any penetrations into the home. You can use this information to make corrections as appropriate.



Seal the attic and the basement first – these are typically the biggest problem areas. The chimney effect is when the warm air near the fire creates air currents and the hot air moves up the chimney to the outside (cooler air). This is the same effect that happens in your whole house when there are leaks in your basement and attic. During cold weather, the cold air is drawn into the base of your home through

leaks/cracks, becomes heated due to it being inside your home, and then exits your attic.

The opposite happens in the summer. Have you ever experienced in the summer that if you have the windows open that the upstairs is hotter than the ground floor. You may have thought that “hot air rises”, so you open the windows to let the hot air out. Wrong. The heavier, cooler air leaks out of the bottom of the house while pulling in the lighter, hotter air through the top of the house. By opening the second floor windows, you have created a huge hole to draw in more hot air. So much for cooling the upstairs.

Air leaks need an air barrier. GreatStuff is a brand name expandable foam product from Dow and you can find these cans at hardware stores. I started using this and quickly discovered that it was more trouble than it was worth. I quickly switched to using GreatStuff Pro, their professional line of products, which has a separate dispenser gun and cans of product.



These products offer way more control (less mess, less waste), last longer and are well worth the money in my opinion. You can pick up a low-end dispenser gun and a can of product for about \$30.

Look for the following in your basement: (1) seal the sill plate all the way around your foundation, (2) any penetrations of the stringer or header joists, (3) any overhangs, and any other penetrations that allow air to flow between the outside and the basement or living space.

Look for the following in your attic: (1) seal the intersection of the top of all of the walls with the bottom of the roof joists, (2) all holes in the wall top plates used to run electrical wire down to an outlet, etc. (3) make sealed, insulated boxes to cover light fixtures, and any other penetrations that allow air to flow between the attic and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor living space.

I made our boxes from 1-inch rigid, foil-faced duct board and taped the box seams with foiled tape to seal them. I made 20-inch cubes so that they fit between the ceiling joists and offered enough volume to dissipate the heat from the light fixture. Seal the bottoms of the boxes to the ceiling drywall with the expandable foam. I placed these thermal boxes over each light fixture, ceiling mounted exhaust fan, etc.

After you have made changes to further seal your home, it would be a good idea to have another blower door test to quantify the results. The goal should be to better seal your home. Remember, a home cannot be too tight, but it can be under ventilated. Next month I will discuss home ventilation.

Resources	
GreatStuff Pro	ABC Supply * 9099 Tyler Blvd Mentor, OH 44060 * 440-255-9200
Rigid, foil-faced duct board	Wolff Bros Supply * 7555 Tyler Blvd. * Mentor, OH 44060 * 440-946-5010
Foiled tape	Wolff Bros or Lowe's

**YMCA Dream Home in LES – by the Trustees**

Residents of Lake Erie Shores have something they can take great pride in today – the Lake County YMCA has chosen Villa Grande at Lake Erie Shores as the site of the 2010 Dream House. Our site was chosen over several others because of the natural beauty of the Lake and its environmental surroundings and tranquil setting. The house will be a design fitting for the Lake and a great asset to an area of Lake Erie Shores that needs a boost for recovery and we are very pleased with their decision.

The Director of Development, Lake County YMCA, Peggy Swanger says, “How grateful we are for all of you and for your willingness to support our project. You can be assured that we will do everything in our power to make this an extraordinary experience for all involved on such a beautiful site. I am genuinely excited to be working with you and LES and I believe you will be very pleased with our commitment to the excellence of this project and to the benefit of Villa Grande and LES and its lovely community.”

The show will run everyday for seven weeks starting at the end of June and will once again give Lake Erie Shores the attention it deserves. It will allow many visitors to see our extraordinary community and witness what all the residents know and love as a beautiful place to live on the Lake.

The show will be organized as it is every year in such a way so as not to disrupt the residents and their lives by directing traffic in and out of Villa Grande and placing cars in the open field adjacent to Villa Grande for overflow parking with volunteer attendants directing the cars. No parking will be permitted in Lake Erie Shores or North Shore Estates streets and property. We do hope that the visitors will want to see Lake Erie Shores and North Shores by driving through the community and witnessing our wonderful life style.



This will bring potential buyers to the area and place Lake Erie Shores back in the limelight of Lake County residential areas and will increase property values as visitors have a chance to see how lovely our community is.

Any questions regarding tickets for the show can be found at the Lake County YMCA website, [LakeCountyYMCA.org](http://LakeCountyYMCA.org), once the information is announced to the public shortly.

**Chuck Hillier - Volunteer Trustee**

The 2009 budget is drawing to a close and there is some good news to share with you. Our 2009 expenditure budget totaled \$132,635.41 but as of the October 31<sup>st</sup> we have only spent \$79,422.32, or put another way, only 60% of budget compared to 83% projected for ten months complete. I urge caution in that we still have several large bills to pay before year end but even with those, I fully expect us to finish the year a significant margin under budget. You may recall that last year at this time things were looking pretty glum from a financial standpoint for us but after we made a number of changes to our operation, the cumulative end result has delivered some very encouraging numbers.

On the income side of the ledger, after a number of delinquent accounts were settled earlier this year, our delinquencies for 2008 ended up pretty comparable to what they currently are for 2009. As strange as this may sound, I personally find that encouraging as it was fully expected by the Finance Committee as well as us (Trustees) that the number of delinquent accounts would surge during calendar year 2009. Fortunately that did not happen! I'll keep you abreast of the numbers as the year draws to a close. We know the past several years have been difficult for everyone but we appreciate the fact that the greatest majority of our members have made it a point to pay their Association dues as this has enabled us to keep our common properties in a quality state and allowed us to do our part to maintain property values during these difficult economic times.

I want to discuss what I feel is one of our biggest success stories over the past several years, that being the correction of drainage



issues which affected Basin #3. The basin is approximately the size of a football field and is sandwiched behind the homes on Commodore Cove, Clipper Cove and Pirates Trail. In 2007 when we paid for an engineering study to be performed on our five different basins, Basin #3 was deemed to be in the second worst condition. The basin had standing water, was surely a breeding ground for mosquitoes and was overgrown with cat tails (see picture) and alder trees. It wasn't until we paid to get it cleaned that we were able to get

a better look at the drainage issues surrounding it and the lack of proper flow to the creek that flowed nearby.



Basin Inlet

To address the poor drainage, we hired a company to come in and engineer solutions. It was a fairly expensive project with the cost totaling slightly more than \$9,000 but the end result is that we now have this basin functioning as it was designed to while still allowing for proper drainage. As you can see in the pictures, grass is growing throughout the basin and it is not suffering the problems encountered prior with standing water and cat tails growing.



Basin Outlet

According to the engineering study performed by Oxbow Engineering, we still need to address issues associated with Basins 2, 4 and 5, with Basin 5 (located between Outrigger Cove, Hideaway Cove and Pebble Beach Cove) being in the worst condition of all our basins.

Another major benefit to repairing the basins is that since the Homeowners Association is responsible for ensuring the basins are properly maintained and cut, correcting the drainage issues reduces annual maintenance costs. When the basin is draining properly as Basins 1 and 3 are, they can be cut with typical lawn mowers but when there are drainage issues, the landscapers cost increases dramatically as he has to send in multiple workers and heavy equipment. In some of our basins, it has not been uncommon for the landscaper's equipment to get stuck in the mud and muck only to force them to bring in even heavier equipment

to get it out. Of course this additional manpower and labor only increases our costs. My opinion is that if we are to control costs/annual fees and have a predictable annual expenditure we need to correct the issues with all the basins, just like we did in Basin 3.

If I can answer any questions you may have about our finances or anything else regarding the Association, please feel free to contact me at [avcmcchi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:avcmcchi@sbcglobal.net) or simply call me at home (350-1640).

I wish you Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year. God Bless and Best Wishes! ~ Chuck

*The art of acceptance is the art of making someone who has just done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one.*

Russell Lynes ~ (1910-, American Editor, Critic)

**Landscaping Committee – by David Spall**

THANK YOU! TO OUR VOLUNTEERS WHO HELPED WITH THE STREAM CLEAN-UP! David Spall, Derek Poindexter, Jon Adkins & Chuck Hillier

We had a great day for the stream clean-up. The weather was perfect for this project. We removed many bags of trash & wood from the streams and also freed up areas that were blocked. The clean-up job was completed in 3.5 hours with 4 volunteers. There are 3 trees in the stream to be cut out and removed.



We ask every home owner not to put YARD WASTE & TRASH in the stream area or dry basins. We need more volunteers on these projects!!! Please keep in mind about volunteering to our community next year. We are doing projects that save on the budget and helps beautify Lake Erie Shores.

**Painesville Township Recycling**

The Township currently offers three recycling drop-off locations: (1) Fire Station #1 – 55 Nye Rd, (2) Recycling Center – 141 Bowhall Rd and (3) Near the Service Garage on Post Rd. There are containers for: (1) paper and (2) “everything else.”



**Resident Articles Wanted**

Thanks to the few residents who have already submitted articles to the Lake Erie Shores newsletter. We would like to have more written article input from residents in future issues. Please submit your ideas to [newsletter@lakeeriesthores.net](mailto:newsletter@lakeeriesthores.net) – articles should be sent by

the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month in order to be included in the next newsletter.

**Contact Information**



Lake Erie Shores Web Site  
[www.lakeeriesthores.com](http://www.lakeeriesthores.com)

**Home Owners Association Committees**

- Welcoming Committee ([welcome@lakeeriesthores.net](mailto:welcome@lakeeriesthores.net))
- Covenants/Restrictions Committee Chair – Bruce Buffie ([buffie723@att.net](mailto:buffie723@att.net))
- Financial Committee Chair - Randy Van Buren ([rcvanburen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rcvanburen@sbcglobal.net))
- Landscaping & Beautification Committee - Dave Spall ([davidspall@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidspall@sbcglobal.net))
- Recreation Committee Co-Chairs - Jonathon Adkins ([jonsuzannaadkins@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jonsuzannaadkins@sbcglobal.net)) and Cory Wertch
- Volunteer Coordinator - Paula Haumesser ([paulahaumesser@sbcglobal.net](mailto:paulahaumesser@sbcglobal.net))
- Newsletter Committee Chair – Jim Sorenson ([newsletter@lakeeriesthores.net](mailto:newsletter@lakeeriesthores.net))

**Board of Trustees**

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|--|--|
| John Guinan<br><a href="mailto:alishenry@aol.com">alishenry@aol.com</a><br>1575 Clipper Cove<br>440-358-1424 | Chuck Hillier<br><a href="mailto:avcmcchi@sbcglobal.net">avcmcchi@sbcglobal.net</a><br>926 Pebble Beach Cove<br>440-350-1640 |
|--|--|

Michael DiSanto

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