

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 21 Wednesday, December 21, 2011

Preparing Your Home for Winter Weather

By Sophie Braccini, Cathy Dausman and Cathy Tyson



Sales Associate Alex Villa with furnace filters in Moraga Hardware.

Photo C. Tyson

The holidays are a time for celebration and fun – nobody wants to see them disrupted by a failing furnace or a bursting pipe. Finding a chimney-sweep on Christmas Eve when the house smells like smoke, instead of Noble fir, sugar cookies and hot cocoa, may not be an easy task. So as you organize those family activities,

don't forget your home and garden—with a little attention ahead of time, being home for the holidays will be festive, not frustrating.

So it's winter solstice. It's not too late to get your house ready for the cold and wet that's still ahead of us. You, of course, cleaned out your gutters weeks ago, right? If not, get that ladder up there



Mayor Days Be Merry! By Susie Iventosch ...read on page D4

fast; and it's a good idea to clear the roof as well. According to contractor Daniel Leleu, of Lamorinda Construction and Consulting, leaves and debris left on the roof can create slippery deposits that will damage your shingles and can be treacherous if you have to walk on the roof. If decomposition has already started, you might have to use a pressure hose to get rid of it.

With our recent spell of freezing temperatures, chances are that if trouble were going to happen, it already has. It's best to insulate exposed pipes with form-fitting neoprene foam or insulating wrap and tape, all available at your local hardware store. Don't forget the above-ground sprinkler system that is often made of plastic. If it cracks, your garden may flood.

Always cover vulnerable trees and bushes if a freeze is predicted, and check the weather-stripping around doors and windows that help keep your home warm and dry.

Also water-related – make sure that the drainage system around the house is still efficient. Especially in an older home, the underground drainpipes can rot, become damaged by roots that grow through the pipe and end up blocking the passage of water. According to Leleu, the best way to make sure that the drainage is working is to go under the house and check for moisture, especially after a rain. If that crawlspace is seriously wet, it's time to seek professional services.

S.Braccini

...continued on page D6