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In this issue...

TIPS

- [Wall Cracks May Not Indicate Foundation Problems](#)
- [10 Things That Make Your Home a Target for Thieves](#)
- [Is Your Chimney Leaking?](#)
- [Good time for Home Inventory](#)

NEWS

- [Gain in Pending Home Sales](#)

FAST FACT

- [Sleepless Death](#)

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Tips

Wall Cracks May Not Indicate Foundation Problems

Normal fluctuations of interior walls often cause problems. Wallboard is fastened to the studs of the ceiling and walls and the joints are taped and joined for finishing. Minor cracks in drywall and some nail-pops are normal occurrences. Slight imperfections, such as nail pops, seam lines, and cracks not exceeding 1/8" are common. Repair cracks with joint compound, sand and repaint. Repair hairline cracks at inside corners with a flexible, paintable caulk. Repair nail pops by resetting or replacing the nail in the drywall. Place another nail 1" or 2" away in the stud and hammer below the drywall surface. Cover the areas with spackling compound and allow to dry completely (second coats may be needed). Sand until smooth and repaint. Wallpaper seams can become loose or curl due to climate changes. Re-attach loose wallpaper.

10 Things That Make Your Home a Target for Thieves

A home is robbed every 14.6 seconds and the average dollar loss per burglary is \$2,119, according to statistics just released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. And that's the good news because burglaries were down slightly in 2010 compared to 2009. Sure you lock your doors and windows when you're not home (you'd be surprised how many people don't). But here are ten things that you're probably doing that make your home a target, and what you should do instead.

[Back to top](#)

Is Your Chimney Leaking?

One thing that brick chimneys, stone chimneys and fireplaces have in common is that eventually most will require some type of maintenance to keep a water tight seal. Leaks into a chimney can cause unsafe heating equipment as well as costly damage to the chimney, the appliances connected to it, and to the building itself.

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We consider referrals from our friends, clients and associates to be the greatest compliment that we could receive. Thank you for keeping our company in mind whenever a referral presents itself.

Is your chimney leaking? Are you experiencing water marks on the ceiling or walls near your chimney? Is there water appearing in the firebox? Similarly, are you experiencing cracks on the exterior of the chimney which seem to keep getting bigger or are bricks actually flaking off from your chimney? Water is the common thread between all of these problems (for the most part) and following [this checklist](#) should help you to be able to arrest water infiltration or prevent further damage.

[Back to top](#)

Good time for Home Inventory

The January weather is a good time for most of us to catch up on some of those "round tuits" (as in "one of these days I'm going to get around to it") tasks. Keeping a current home inventory is always a good idea and January is a good time to note all those nice things you've added (or deleted) since your last home inventory. Searching the net for "home inventory software" will give you a choice of plenty of reasonably-priced, reliable programs. Make a room-by-room inventory of everything in your house for insurance and replacement purposes. Take photographs or video. Store the information in a fire-proof safe, safety deposit box or digitally off-site. If disaster does strike, the information will help you to remember just what you had and to document insurance claims.

[Back to top](#)

NEWS

Pending home sales continued to gain in November and reached the highest level in 19 months, according to the National Association of REALTORS®. The Pending Home Sales Index, a forward-looking indicator based on contract signings, increased 7.3 percent to 100.1 in November from an upwardly revised 93.3 in October and is 5.9 percent above November 2010 when it stood at 94.5. The October upward revision resulted in a 10.4 percent monthly gain. The last time the index was higher was in April 2010 when it reached 111.5 as buyers rushed to beat the deadline for the home buyer tax credit. The data reflects contracts but not closings. Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, said the gains may result partially from delayed transactions. "Some of the increase in pending home sales appears to be from buyers recommitting after an initial contract ran into problems, often with the mortgage."

[Back to top](#)

Fast Facts

- Angel Falls in Venezuela is the worlds highest waterfall, The water of Falls drops 3,212 feet (979 meters).
- The world's population has been increased 3.1 billion in last 40 years.
- Gas traffic lights were used in London before the advent of motorcars to control the flow of horse buggies and pedestrians. The green and red lights had the same meanings as today.
- A blue whale's (the biggest creature ever to have lived on earth) tongue can weigh more than an elephant.
- A normal person will die from total lack of sleep sooner than from starvation.

[Back to top](#)



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