

# Over the Fence

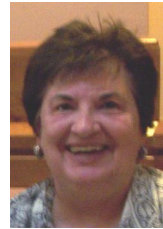
NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

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## Celebrate a New Look for Your Home in the New Year

(ARA) Each year about 70 percent of Americans make a New Year's resolution and most soon forget they ever made one. Time for a change? Why not resolve to give your old house a new look in the New Year? Start the new decade with a new attitude about your home's makeover.

- **Here's one you can stick to.** Many home improvement projects can pay dividends and save energy. For example, in 2010, U.S. tax credits abound for energy-efficient upgrades like windows, doors, insulation, water heaters, roofing and certain appliances.

- **Paint a room to renew it.** Apply new interior paint to brighten up your home and brush away the winter blues. Hot colors for 2010 include bright or warm yellows, lavender for bedrooms and slate or charcoal grays to replace tan and beige tones as popular neutrals.

- **Front and center.** While you're painting, remember the front door. A fresh coat of paint or polyurethane on a fiberglass or wood entry door can refresh the new look and luster. Consider whether the door still closes properly or if you can feel air leaks around it. If so, it's time to replace the weatherstripping or the door itself. Please visit [aracontent.com](http://aracontent.com) for the full article. Cheers to you and your home!

<http://www.aracontent.com/PrintSite/Default.aspx>



## 4 Essential Steps to Conserve Energy and Save Money Through the Winter

(ARA) Now that winter has arrived, it's important to take these four steps to improve your home's energy efficiency—they'll save you money and keep you warm, all season long.

### 1. Insulate

Insulating areas such as attics, basements and crawlspaces can make your home more comfortable and lower your energy bills.

### 2. Seal your windows

Use silicone caulk to seal air leaks or place shrink wrap film over drafty windows to help reduce energy loss.

### 3. Have your furnace inspected and clean your HVAC system

"Having your HVAC system inspected and cleaned can extend the life of your furnace and can even make it run up to 20 percent more efficiently," says Aaron Marshbanks, board member at NADCA—The HVAC Inspection, Maintenance & Restoration Association. "Having your system cleaned can also save up to 30 percent in energy costs and the increase in air flow usually translates into increased comfort."

### 4. Change filters regularly

Once you have a clean HVAC system, it's crucial to change your furnace filters regularly. Change your furnace filter once a month to keep your system running at peak performance.

For more information on how to winterize your home, visit [NADCA.com](http://NADCA.com).



## Feed the Birds and Other Winter Gardening Tips

- Add garden record keeping to the list of New Year's resolutions. Make a note of which varieties of flowers and vegetables do best and which do poorly in your garden.
- Avoid heavy traffic on the dormant lawn. Dry grass is easily broken and the crown of the plant may be severely damaged or killed.
- Feed the birds regularly and see that they have water. Birds like suet, fruit, nuts, and bread crumbs as well as bird seed.
- If you have some time this winter, paint the handles of garden tools red or orange. This will preserve the wood and make the tools easier to locate in the garden or on the lawn.

### WINTER TIP: Use Your Ceiling Fan This Winter and Stay Warm!

Reverse the switch on your ceiling fan to run counterclockwise (reverse; this looks clockwise as you are looking up). This will redirect the warm air from the ceiling and down the walls and into the living space. Run the fan at a low speed so that you don't actually cool the warm air that you are moving downward.



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**"If you are looking for a real estate broker who understands the importance of customer service, give me a call. I will make the process of buying or selling your home a pleasant one. And, if you know anyone needing real estate assistance, I would appreciate the referral." Thank you, Joanne (Cell: 510-589-4794)**



**Repair, Replace, Relax** with Fidelity National Home Warranty (FNHW). A home warranty from FNHW provides both the home buyer and seller with "peace of mind" when it comes to repairs and/or replacement of a home's major systems and appliances. FNHW prides itself on superior customer service, including quick response time and efficient solutions for homeowners' problems and needs.



*If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the near future, please call for a personal interview and property assessment with no obligation.*



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## January is National Hot Tea Month

Stay Warm This Winter—Snuggle Up to a Hot Cup of Tea



*Tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world next to water, and can be found in almost 80% of all U.S. households. It is the only beverage commonly served hot or iced, anytime, anywhere, for any occasion. On any given day, over 127 million Americans are drinking tea.*



### History:

Tea is nearly 5,000 years old. It was discovered in 2737 BC by Chinese Emperor Shen-Nung, known as the "Divine Healer," when as legend goes, some tea leaves accidentally blew into the Emperor's pot of boiling water.

### Caffeine Content:

Tea is naturally low in caffeine. A cup of Black Tea, for example, contains about 40 milligrams of caffeine.

### Cost Per Serving:

Prepared in the home, tea costs about three cents per serving, cup or glass. Tea continues to remain one of the most economical beverages available.

For more information and facts, visit:  
<http://www.teausa.org/index.cfm>

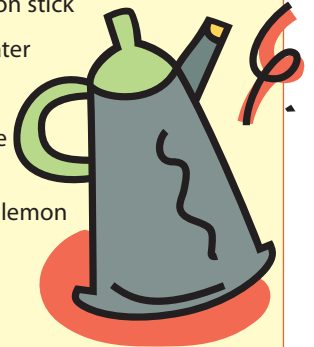


### HOT SPICED TEA

SERVES 6-8

#### Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 inch cinnamon stick
- 6 cups cold water
- 6 tea bags
- 3/4 cup orange juice
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/2 cup sugar



#### Directions

- Add spices to water and bring to a rolling boil.
- Add tea bags, cover, and steep for 5 minutes.
- Strain into heated teapot or carafe.
- Heat juices and sugar just to boiling.
- Add to hot tea.

