



Article by Steve Thelen

Even though I am scooping snow today, spring is just around the corner. Now is the time for doing the necessary planning for those tasks that need to be done each spring.

Whether one is preparing a house for sale, or just wanting to develop a good general maintenance program, the following suggestions hopefully will be beneficial.

In either case, most of us all want our house to look as good as it can be. But, many of us have a tendency to ignore subtle maintenance issues and before long we have ignored them completely. While it is important to examine one's house from an aesthetic viewpoint, it is of equal importance to have some system for monitoring maintenance issues. Having a handle on maintenance issues will help you if you intend to sell your home in the next few months, or five years from now.

I recommend taking a walk across the street for an objective view of one's home. Try to view your home as your friends/visitors, or even potential buyers would view your home. Compare your home with neighboring properties. Do some of the properties stand out? Why? Is it a maintenance issue? Could it be a landscaping situation? Or, could it be something as simple as a change in color schemes? Be honest with yourself here.

An inspection by a Licensed Home Inspector can help identify maintenance issues. These professionals can spot active problems as well as potential trouble spots. They will check out roofs, foundations, gutters, exterior walls, doors/windows, porches/decks, sidewalks and driveways in most cases. In addition, their inspections typically include furnace/central air, plumbing, electrical and attic, basement and crawl space areas. Make sure your inspector of choice is a member of The American Society of Home Inspectors. If you need help locating a reputable inspector, consult your realtor. They should be able to give you several companies from which to choose. In addition, the inspector can generally give "ball park" ideas of costs to make recommended repairs. These inspections typically cost \$300 - \$400 (well worth the money I think). Many prudent homesellers are now having Whole House Inspections done prior to placing their home on the market so that they can deal with any potential problems that could affect a sale.

Many times some simple landscaping can turn a drab, uninteresting property into a warm, inviting home. I recommend taking photos of one's home to Landscape Professionals and let them help you develop a landscape plan. The plan can be simple or extensive. By Landscape Professionals I mean the local nurseries that are involved in landscaping 365 days a year. They know what works and doesn't work in our climate and with our soil types. Let them know your budget and time frame. These professionals will help you tailor and prioritize the details.

Take a walk or a drive through other neighborhoods with home styles similar to yours. Are there color schemes that appeal to you? Have a friend check them out so that you have a second opinion. Take photos of those color schemes that appeal to you to your local paint supplier. They can match colors and often suggest complimenting colors for trim, shutters, etc. They also know the colors that are currently in vogue. The painting pros also know which colors work best with certain "period" type homes. They can also recommend the best products for the job.

There are a few basics that need to be done in Lincoln every year, sometimes even twice. Some of these include:

- Check your roof for damage. To avoid falling from a roof use binoculars or hire a roofer.
- Gutters, downspouts and extensions need to be cleaned.
- Check to see that the foundation has adequate backfill to direct water away from the house.
- Clean window wells and use window well covers.
- Check siding, trim, window frames and shutters for damage.

It is best to get started now if possible. This will allow you to get on the calendars of the roofers, painters, landscapers, etc. As with many things, you are either going to pay for it now or pay for it later. You might as well be the recipient of your efforts, instead of all of the enjoyment going to new owners down the road..... which will occur if you delay the process until just prior to selling.

Calling on All Boulevard Residents...

(And those who would like to get some exercise and fresh air)

On Saturday, March 31st, CCNA and students from the University of Nebraska will be participating in the UNL Big Event! This is a community project where neighbors and students work together on a neighborhood beautification assignment. Our joint project will be to mulch around all of the trees on our boulevards, the entrance to our neighborhood at 27th & Hwy 2 and around some of the street trees on 27th. Lincoln Parks and Recreation will provide the free mulch.

**THIS IS A GREAT WAY
TO GET A JUMP ON SPRING
AND BEAUTIFY THE NEIGHBORHOOD!**

CCNA Needs to Provide the Following:

- At least 2 adult volunteers for each individual boulevard section
- Wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels
- Everyone will meet at Pocras Park (Bradfield Drive and Sewell Street) at 9:00 that morning.
- Refreshments will be served, directions given and pictures taken.
- Everything should be finished by early afternoon

We need to know as soon as possible who will be able to help. If we have no one for your particular boulevard or area, then we will not be able to have students do clean-up and apply mulch. Let us know by either calling 423-8923 (leave a message with your name, number and boulevard/area) or email ccna@neb.rr.com with the same information.

Your Home Is Your Castle Your Neighborhood Is Your Kingdom

For 99% of all Americans, your home will be the largest investment you will ever make. Not only will it be the “roof over your head” and the place where memories are made, but hopefully it will be a type of savings account; a savings account that will increase in value if you want to borrow against its equity for your children’s college education, a home improvement project, a retirement property,...

This increase in value, which in turn will increase your equity, depends on how you treat your home and your neighborhood. This new section of *The Chronicle* will feature a neighborhood specialist who will give tips and pointers on how to maintain your most important investment – your home.

Our feature contributor for this publication is Steve Thelen. Steve and his wife Jan live on South 26th Street. They have lived in their lovely two story home for almost 28 years and have raised their two children there. Steve is a Realtor with Home Real Estate and knows the importance of keeping a home and the neighborhood well maintained.

If you would like to contribute an article, mail or email it to CCNA.