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# *The Green Pages*

**Serving Northern Virginia & Points South Since 1969**

**January 2011**

**SPRING CLEANING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER  
HERE ARE THE TOP TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS MONTH**

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### **Get Organized**

Kick off your spring cleaning by getting organized: Pick up and eliminate clutter in each room before you start cleaning. Try placing a cardboard box and two or three garbage bags in each room you're decluttering. Then, fill them as you sort through your shelves, cabinets, and closets.

### **Donate & Store**

Donate old books, magazines, toys, and clothes that you don't wear to charity, or fill a box for your next garage sale. If you can't bear to give away old magazines and books, box them up and store them out of the way.

### **Make a Wardrobe Transition**

Now that it's warm outside, have your winter clothes cleaned. Consider storing clothes at a dry cleaner if you don't have enough space. Put away gloves, winter clothing items, and boots so you'll have plenty of space for spring clothing.

### **Freshen Bedrooms**

Rotate and flip mattresses. Wash blankets or comforters or take them to be cleaned. Wash mattress pad and bed skirt. Have pillows professionally cleaned or hang them outside in the fresh air, or freshen with the air (no heat) cycle of your clothes dryer. Wash or dry clean rugs.

### **Clean Floors & More**

Wash and/or wax floors, depending on their material. Then, deep-clean rugs or have them professionally cleaned. Wash baseboards. Vacuum upholstery and draperies. Dust and wax wood furniture. Flip sofa and chair cushions.

### **Clean Up, Down, and All Around**

Now is the time to clean light fixtures, ceiling fans, and mirrors. Dust or wash window blinds, and replace bent or worn mini blinds. It would also be a good idea to wash and iron curtains or have them cleaned.

### **Clean Your Bathrooms**

You may scrub your bathroom every week, but now it's time to battle clutter and refresh old products. Go through your medicine cabinets and safely discard any outdated products. Replace worn bath mats, shower curtains, and liners, or wash and dry shower curtains and liners.

### **Clear Out Your Kitchen**

Take time to clear out your pantry, kitchen cabinets, and drawers. Wipe out and install fresh shelf paper. Store or donate equipment you don't use, such as small appliances or cookware. Discard stale spices or dated items such as baking powder. Clean the refrigerator and freezer. Vacuum the cooling coils under or behind your refrigerator.

### **Wash Your Windows**

Wash your window inside and outside. Use a commercial glass spray, or try a homemade solution of two tablespoons of ammonia or vinegar and a quart of water. Then use lint-free cloths, strong paper towels, or crumpled newspapers to rub away streaks. Don't forget to clean storm windows and screens.

### **Check Batteries & Stay Safe**

Spring cleaning is the perfect opportunity to check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Perform all required safety checks. If you don't own a fire extinguishers purchase one. Learn how to use it and keep it in the kitchen.

# January 2011 Calendar of Events Northern Virginia & Points South

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Matt Reich,</b> <b>Raymond Rae</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Harris Pavilion</b> <b>Manassas</b> <b>We Are</b> <b>Ice Skating</b> <b>FREE SKATE</b> <b>6:00 - 9:00 pm</b> <b>703-361-9800</b> 	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>Chinn Park</b> <b>Regional Library</b> <b>Martin Luther</b> <b>King, Jr. Choir</b> <b>3pm</b> <b>703-792-4800</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Meagan Ross</b> 	<b>11</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Chris Bution</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Harris Pavilion</b> <b>Manassas</b> <b>We Are</b> <b>Ice Skating</b> <b>FREE SKATE</b> <b>6:00 - 9:00 pm</b> <b>703-361-9800</b>	<b>13</b> <b>Chinn Park</b> <b>Regional Library</b> <b>*Family Craft</b> <b>Night: "Just</b> <b>Chillin" Polar</b> <b>Bear Craft*</b> <b>7pm</b> <b>703-792-4800</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Jennifer Bloomer</b> <b>Cathy Dixon</b> <b>Michael Creel</b> <b>Rick Goodwin</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Jennifer Stalker</b>
<b>16</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Albert Hockaday</b> <b>Brandi Quam</b> <b>Kirsten Hughes</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Donald Bell</b>	<b>18</b> <b>Chinn Park</b> <b>Regional Library</b> <b>Valentines</b> <b>For Vet</b> <b>Open event</b> <b>703-792-4800</b>  <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Brian Heise</b> <b>Joanne Lee</b> <b>Julie McElwain</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Harris Pavilion</b> <b>Manassas</b> <b>We Are</b> <b>Ice Skating</b> <b>FREE SKATE</b> <b>6:00 - 9:00 pm</b> <b>703-361-9800</b>  <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Jennifer</b> <b>Schermerhom</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Scott Sowers</b> 	<b>22</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Ernesto Arroyo</b> <b>Jason Hendrixson</b>
<b>23 /30</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Charles Lewes III</b>	<b>24/31</b> <b>24-Happy Birthday</b> <b>Jay Conley</b> <b>31-Happy Birthday</b> <b>Diana Rick</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Eric Weatherhotz</b> <b>Marcus Hamlin</b> <b>Greg Hawkins</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Missy Johnson</b> <b>Salvia Giridhar</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Alice Homan</b> <b>Jimmy Nolen</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Ethan Fanston</b> <b>Andy Shrieves</b>	<b>29</b> <b>Happy Birthday</b> <b>Jody Doplis</b> <b>Jennifer Brooks</b>
						
<b>Manassas Museum —From the Ashes: Manassas Then and Now 1860-Present Admission \$5</b> <b>Monday January 24th-Sunday January 30th 703-368-1873</b>						

Preferred Professionals

- **Mortgage Company**
- George Mason Mortgage/Timur Tunador 703-934-4108
- Bank of America/Rick Elmendorf 703-227-2531
- Virginia Heritage Mortgage/ Tony Denk 703-766-6406
- George Mason Mortgage/Kim Ramey 703-216-2866
- **Tree Service**
- Tree Bark/Vinny Resch 703-690-6064
- **Home Improvement**
- First Class Contracting/Craig Avallone 703-615-9319
- **Garage Door Sales & Repair**
- Frederick's Overhead Doors 703-731-5947
- **Peterson Chimney Sweeps & Home Repairs**
- Eric Peterson 703-351-6611
- **Masonry Construction/Painting & General Home Repairs**
- Craig Avallone 703-615-9319
- Trent Butcher 703-597-2233
- Martin Alvarenja 703-675-0068
- **Cleaning Services**
- Guadalupe Quinteros 571-722-9608
- Rosa Villalpando 571-723-5935
- Maria's Cleaning Service 703-605-5218
- **Title Company**
- RGS 703-491-9600
- Ekko Title 703-497-3556
- **Heating & Cooling Repair**
- Weather Chasers 703-393-8444
- **Printing Service**
- Ken's Speed Print 703-494-4545
- **Carpet & Flooring**
- Carpet & Floor Outlet (Nadar) 703-497-4747
- **Web Design**
- VASI (Sherri Arnaiz) 703-330-8268
- **Family Portraits**
- Rob Riebe (specializing in children's portraits) 540-288-3828
- **Tastefully Simple**
- Meagan Ross 703-303-9867
- [Tastefullysimple.com/web/mross](http://Tastefullysimple.com/web/mross)
- **Home Computer Help**
- Matt Harner 571-276-4830
- John O'Meara 703-221-8112
- **American Cabinet Refacers**
- Keith Ferencz 703-503-6600
- **Property Management**
- Selling Virginia 703-583-4148

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# FOR SALE



**3907 Forestdale Ave  
Woodbridge, VA 22193  
\$205,000**

4 bedroom, 2 full bath, 2 level home with deck that backs to wooded backyard. Shed on rear of lot. Very well cared for and in great shape.

For Sale



**15272 Lodge Terrace  
Woodbridge, VA 22191  
\$169,900**

3 level end unit townhome with 3 or 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, walk out patio off family room, fireplace on main level, big kitchen. Carpet and paint only 2 years old. Nice location at Rippon Landing.

For Sale



**4071 Tarpon Lane  
Woodbridge, VA 22193  
\$315,900**

Immaculate renovated home. Enjoy summer days on the large wrap around porch/back deck with adjacent 15x24 pool . Enjoy cozy winter evenings by fireplace. 4th bedroom not legal. Large lot with mature trees, landscaping, and fenced back yard on large lot. Freshly painted with new upgraded flooring.

For Sale

# ASHLEY'S ACTION PAGE

## Tax Credit For Home-Energy Upgrades Gets Reduced

### Credits are extended into 2011, but aren't as much of an incentive.

Forget holiday door-buster sales. For big savings, some homeowners are actually buying themselves new doors for Christmas this year, in time to claim the government's tax credit for home energy efficiency on their income taxes.

The credit covers energy-efficient doors and windows, insulation, roofs, water heaters, biomass stoves, and heating and air-conditioning systems. And the savings can be big: It covers 30% of the cost of improvements, and taxpayers can get a credit of up to a total \$1,500 for all qualifying improvements they've made to their principal residences during 2009 and 2010.

The credit expires on Dec. 31. But buried in the legislation that extends tax cuts made while President Bush was in office is also an extension of the home-energy tax credit. The catch: In 2011 that tax credit will be reduced significantly.

### Not So Generous

In the bill, homeowners can claim only up to \$500, said John W. Roth, senior tax analyst for CCH, a Riverwoods, Ill., tax publisher. It's also a lifetime tax credit, meaning that if you've claimed the maximum of \$500 in past years for home-efficiency upgrades -- beginning after Dec. 31, 2005 -- you can't do it again.

Under the new rules, there are also limits for individual projects. For example, homeowners can receive a maximum of only \$200 for replacing their windows and \$150 for replacing a furnace, Roth said. That's why homeowners who have the means and the time to take advantage of the credit that expires at the end of this year might want to get their projects done now.

Because while it still may be possible to get a credit for work done next year, it won't be nearly as attractive and might not even be much of an incentive: "If you haven't taken advantage of this credit, I think you've lost a real opportunity," Roth said.

### Crunch Time

Some homeowners, operating under the assumption that the tax credits wouldn't get renewed, have been hustling over the past several weeks to get their projects finished on time. To qualify for the credit in the 2010 tax year, not only do items need to be purchased, but they also have to be put into use by the deadline, said Rial Moulton, a certified financial planner and co-founder of Retirement & Tax Planning Specialists in Spokane, Wash. The government "didn't want people to buy this stuff and have it sitting around," Moulton said. The purpose of the credit is to make homes more energy efficient, and allowing people to buy items and store them in the garage for a couple years until they got around to installing them would defeat that goal, he says.

While the specification isn't a big issue for do-it-yourself projects, it can throw a wrench into homeowners' plans when they need a professional for installation. So at crunch time, part of good comparison shopping on these items involves not only price, but also whether someone would be able to install the items in time.

Even earlier this month, Home Depot had to inform some customers that certain projects wouldn't be finished before the credit's expiration, said Bill Phillips, director of program merchandising for Home Depot's installation business. It's not only a scheduling hurdle, he adds: Some projects require more lead time, such as custom windows, which can take weeks to get from the manufacturer. Other projects, such as adding insulation, are doable for an average do-it-yourselfer, Phillips said. But those planning on doing their own installation should also get going, to be in accordance with the law. In the event you're audited, you'd have to tell the Internal Revenue Service that you installed the items by the end of the year, Moulton said.

### The Fine Print

To ensure the product qualifies for a tax credit, obtain a copy of the manufacturer's certification letter that says so, Phillips said. You'll need that for your records, along with all receipts, in the event that you get audited.

Also be aware that installation costs aren't covered for all projects. For instance, taxpayers get no credit for the cost of having someone install their insulation, doors, windows or roofs. Costs to install water heaters, biomass stoves and heating and air-conditioning systems, however, are covered, according to EnergyStar.gov/taxcredits. Note that these tax credits are "nonrefundable," meaning that taxpayers can't get more back in credits than they pay in federal income tax. That said, for the 2010 tax year, unless you won't owe anything in taxes, you'd see a benefit, Moulton said.

Also, many taxpayers aren't aware that a credit gives a "way better benefit than a deduction," Moulton said. For example, a \$1,500 deduction for a married couple in the 15% marginal tax bracket would end up being about a \$225 benefit, he says. With a credit, you'd see the benefit of the entire \$1,500, he said.

For the more ambitious and green homeowners: A separate 30% credit for other home-efficiency improvements, including solar-energy systems, geothermal heat pumps and wind turbines, is still in effect until 2016. And it doesn't have a maximum dollar amount.



This page was produced by Ashley Spencer. If you have any interesting facts that you would like to share or would like additional information about what's published on this page contact me at 703-986-5813/703-598-9385 or email me at [AshleySpencer@sellingvirginia.com](mailto:AshleySpencer@sellingvirginia.com)

# The Blogging Realtor—Michelle Cashwell

## I agree with Perry Como when it comes to the significance of home and the holidays.

“Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays, 'cause no matter how far away you roam when you pine for the sunshine of a friendly face for the holidays, you can't beat. Home, sweet home”

### I have compiled some tips to make your house even homier during the holiday season for your own enjoyment or potential buyers.

- 1) Put a colorful doormat in front. This will add more curb appeal to your home and help keep visitors from tracking dirt inside.
  - 2) Display fresh flowers or holiday arrangement in the kitchen or dining room. This will add color and a fresh smell to your home.
  - 3) Turn on all the lights. Everyone loves to feel welcome, and nothing welcomes them more than turning on the lights and opening the blinds.
  - 4) Touch up with fresh paint. Keep it neutral, but touch-ups with fresh paint is one of the best and least-expensive investments you can make.
  - 5) Play music during the day and or showings. Keep the volume low, but keep a CD playing or tune to an easy-listening music station.
  - 6) Leave out fresh-baked cookies. It makes your home feel and smell inviting.
  - 7) Shovel the driveway and walkways. You want everyone to get to your front door safely, so keep the area passable and clean.
- You could be in this immaculate four bedroom home for the holidays.



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# Jon's Featured Winery



Located outside the village of Middleburg in the beautiful Virginia Piedmont, Chrysalis Vineyards is becoming one of the finest estate wineries on the East Coast. Having completed Their 9th harvest, they have established 71 acres of vineyards, specializing in unusual Spanish and French varietals and the native Virginia grape, Norton, in addition to substantial plantings of traditional grapes. They are new, excited and energized, as they combine the best of modern techniques with the traditional hand-crafted winemaking methods of the Old World.

Please take a tour of their web site to learn about Chrysalis Vineyards. Their tasting room complex welcomes all visitors with patio seating for 40, and Their picnic pavilion sports twin 48 inch *Iron Works* grills where you can cook up your own barbecue. So bring your appetite, grilling supplies and come visit them. They're creating unique wines that appeal not only to the tastes of our fellow Virginians, but to wine lovers the world over. Since the colonial days of Thomas Jefferson, Virginia has enjoyed a reputation as one of the first producers of fine wines in North America. The tradition continues at Chrysalis Vineyards as they produce premium wines of world class standing.



**23876 Champe Ford Road  
Middleburg, Virginia 20117  
540-687-8222**

# Ask Cherish



Dear Cherish,

What are the top 10 things I can do to prepare my home to list to get the most money?

Sincerely,  
Urgent Seller

Dear Seller,

- 1—MAINTENANCE Make all known repairs, it is important to have your home shown without any known defects. If a buyer walks in and sees a broken or cracked window they will only be discouraged that more repairs await them.
- 2—Touch up paint on all exterior wood and trim to include seal deck. Peeling and chipping paint is a red flag to buyers that the home has deferred maintenance. You want them to walk in knowing that the home has been proudly owned.
- 3—CONDITION Service HVAC and have chimney swept, if you miss this it will simply arise to be requested at the time of your home inspection. This should be done annually anyway (aren't you about due).
- 4—UPKEEP Remove any and all mold and mildew from baths or re-grout. There is nothing less attractive than a moldy bath, well a dirty kitchen maybe. Consider buying a new shower curtain and liner to spruce up the room also.
- 5—CLUTTER Clean and scrub every room, elbow grease is free and will make you money. Professionally clean carpets and draperies, **REMOVE ALL CLUTTER** access furniture (consider a storage unit if you have oversized piece in home). Clutter is the biggest problem with any listing, clutter is a killer. I have shown thousands of homes and list hundreds. And every home with clutter the buyer walks right back out. They can't see past it., spend time removing it. Kitchen spend extra time here removing all items from countertops and remove all magnets and pictures from front of refrigerator.
- 6—DECORATE Touch up paint or if the color is loud a neutral color will go a long way.
- 7—CURB APPEAL Mow, trim and manicure grass, bushes , trees and shrubs. Throw down mulch in front beds too. Its important to have a great picture of your home and a manicured lawn is the frame.
- 8—Organize closets, storage and garages.
- 9—Order a home warranty through us, while you are on the market your home warranty is free and will cover and repairs that may be needed while you are on the market with only the \$100 deductible.
- 10—Get the best representation to sell your home fast. It is important to list your home for the right price and have an agent you trust.

Our office will guide you to sell your home as fast as possible. You do this list and I will make you more money. If you would like a free market analysis or would like me to visit your home for more information please feel free to contact me at 703-217-3278 or [cherishgreen@sellingvirginia.com](mailto:cherishgreen@sellingvirginia.com)