

HOME INSIDE & OUTSIDE

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2007 SECTION H

The risks of RADON

This region is prone to high levels of the invisible danger. What can you do about it?



The Enquirer / Megan Booker

When David and Michelle Cagwin (holding son Ethan) finished the basement in their Loveland home they installed a system that reduces radon levels.

By Amy Howell / ahowell@enquirer.com

You might have missed the U.S. surgeon general's recent warning about the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the nation's second leading cause of lung cancer, behind smoking.

The culprit is radon, an invisible, odorless and tasteless radioactive gas that leaches through soil and seeps into homes. It's blamed for 20,000 lung-cancer related deaths every year in the United States.

Half of all homes in Ohio have "unsafe" radon levels, and the number of people living in Ohio counties with "elevated" levels – including Hamilton, Butler and Warren counties – is the second largest in the United States, according to the EPA's most recent analysis of 1990 Census data. Pennsylvania had the greatest number of people living in areas of elevated radon levels. Kentucky ranked 17th.

"In my mind, it's not whether you have (radon) or not, it's how much do you have, and what do you need to do about it," says Liz James, radon program administrator with the Ohio Department of Health.

INSIDE

Why this region is a hot spot for radon and what you can do to rid your home of the risk. **H2**



David Holmes, a radon specialist, points out the radon mitigation system piping installed in the Cagwins' basement. The EPA recommends all homeowners conduct a short-term radon test.

Clean up your laundry room's act

The Simpson Door Co.'s new decorative laundry-room door brings vintage charm to a room that is no longer tucked away at the back of the house or in a corner of the basement.

The word "Laundry" and the design of a washboard and tub are etched into frosted glass.

Designs for pantry, media and wine-room doors also are available.

Prices vary depending on the type of wood, the retailer and the size and thickness of the door. A standard 6-foot, 8-inch door of Douglas fir, for example, would cost \$350-\$425.

For information and local dealers: www.simpsondoor.com.



Amy Howell

Courtesy of Simpson Door Co.

First-time owners kindle revival of Camp Washington home

By Jenny Callison / Enquirer contributor

Mimi Rook and Pat Staples' new home in historic Camp Washington is testament to the value of being open to possibilities.

The possibility that a rundown 19th-century house could be beautifully restored, becoming another success story for the Camp Washington Community Board's quest to stabilize the neighborhood's housing stock.

The possibility that Rook and Staples could purchase the house, becoming homeowners for the first time.

When community board president and CEO Paul Rudemiller proposed to Rook and Staples that they help restore the house and then buy it, the idea seemed incredible. The two had rented for years and didn't have bundles of cash to invest in real estate.

Staples, who works with adolescents in drug rehabilitation, and Rook, a yoga

and Pilates instructor who also works at the Cincinnati, have pursued careers that pay modest salaries.

The three-story structure long ago had been converted into three flats and chopped into a warren of rooms. It was also, in Rook's words, "knee-deep in trash."

But one year later, the couple live in their new home, which they helped design to suit their taste and needs.

Rook had walked by the house many times and marveled at its architectural features and solid construction. When she and Staples toured it for the first time, she had an epiphany.

"Pat asked me if I wanted a room for yoga and meditation," she recalls.

"I told him I wanted the whole first floor – I wanted to open my own studio where I could teach."

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Photos by Cara Owsley / The Enquirer

Pat Staples and Mimi Rook have made a comfortable home for Cougy (left) and Gordy in Camp Washington.

FRONT DOORS



A weekly feature that takes you inside interesting new and newly redone living spaces in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.



INSIDE Jim Dulley details the tax credits available to those who make energy-saving home improvements. **H4**



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