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Home maintenance tips for first-time buyers

time is an experience no one for- If the caulking is old, strip it off and gets - so don't let yourself get over- re-caulk. whelmed. With so much to consider beyond the mortgage payments, - This allows your air conditioner inspections, and the property taxes, and furnace systems to run more efmany first-time buyers overlook ficiently. Clogged filters mean that your furnace since there's no guaran-

should also be done right away for energy efficiency and to save money in the long

"Many first-time homebuyers are intimidated by home maintenance and are often unaware of how simple it can be," says Dave Walton, director of home ideas at EnerCare Home Services (formerly Direct Energy Home Services). "Learning how to perform routine upkeep can help save from unexpected and costly repairs down the road, and even increase your home's resale value."

Walton offers these simple tips to help manage the maintenance during the first year of home ownership:

 Get your ducts cleaned - The average duct cleaning removes approximately five pounds of dust and debris. Hire professionals for this job, especially if the previous owners had pets or if the house has recently been renovated. If you're moving into a brand new home, check with your builder to see if a duct cleaning is included at closing.

· Seal leaks around windows and doors - Up to 30 per cent of heating and cooling costs in a home can occur due to poorly fitted windows and doors. Add caulking or



Visit an Open House this weekend.

Purchasing a home for the first sealing if needed to reduce air leaks.

 Replace or wash furnace filters important maintenance tasks that motors must work harder and use

more energy. It's best to replace or wash filters every three months, so add quarterly reminders to your calendar so you don't forget.

 Have your furnace inspected – Have a licensed technician inspect tee that previous owners performed

routine maintenance. Because your air conditioning system works handin-hand with your furnace, it's important to make sure both are working safely and efficiently, especially before the heat spikes.

 Hire qualified contractors Don't try to save money by making

improvements and repairs you aren't qualified to make. It's always best to hire professionals to do work you're not sure about to avoid injuries and keep your home in top condition.

More simple home maintenance tips are available at www.davescornwww.newscanada.com



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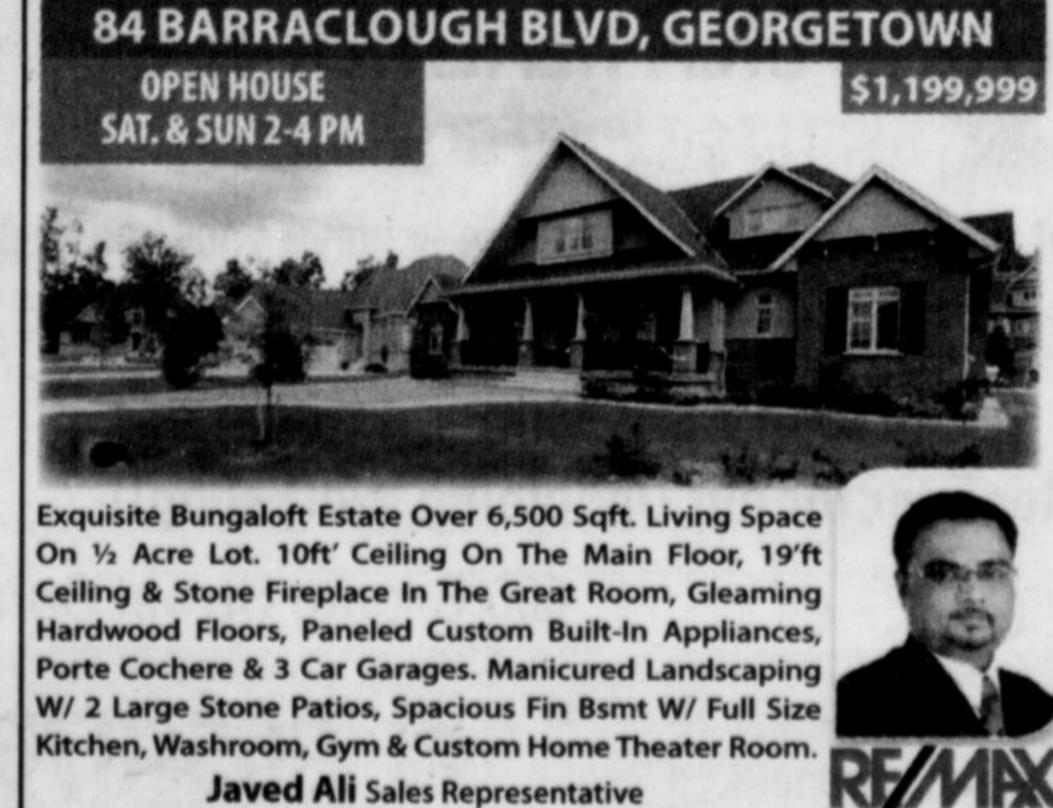


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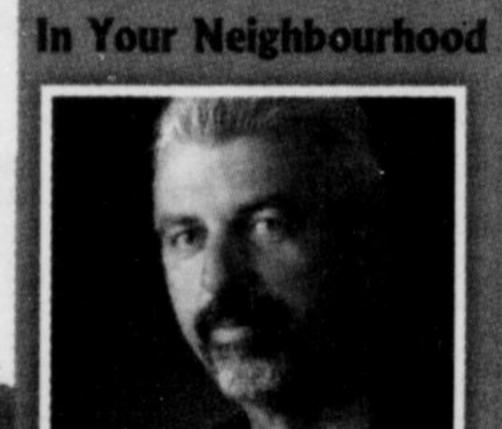
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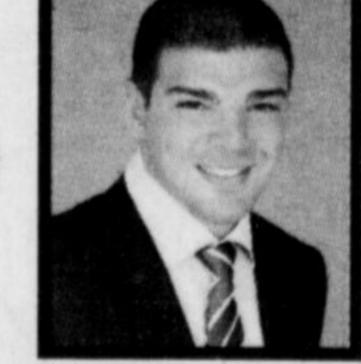
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