

On The Homefront

Each week a different business-person, artisan or professional who lives or works in Lansing will share some aspect about his or her occupation that may be useful to Lansing residents. Interested in sharing your skills? Call us at 533-7963.

Radon And The Home Buyer/Seller

By Jerry Bass

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that comes from the ground. As we walk outside in fields, there may be radon all around us. Because air is flowing freely, we are not affected by it. Nonetheless, long term exposure can cause serious health problems and, as a result, radon concerns many home buyers and sellers.

Radon usually enters the house from the ground through cracks in the basement. If the basement of the house you are looking at is one that you'll be using regularly, it's a good to check to make sure the levels are acceptable. Basements that have been closed up for some time may have higher concentrations of radon than homes that are well ventilated. One way you can dissipate radon is simply to open the windows. There are also other radon mitigation techniques.

If the cellar is rarely used and is ventilated, you probably won't be harmed even if there is some radon because there won't be much exposure. But if the basement has a family room or other rooms in it, you will probably want to be more concerned and careful when checking the radon.

Radon can also enter the house through drinking water faucets in the kitchen and shower heads in the bath. There are also ways to mitigate this. Occasionally, radon comes in houses that have wells, when air mixes with the well water. Again this is not frequent, but it is something you may want to look into.

First, you'll want to test for radon. Some

do-it-yourself tests can be purchased at hardware stores. You follow the directions and then mail it to the company that reports the radon level. Professionals also do tests. They sometimes leave kits in the house from 24 hours to 5-7 days and then send them out to be interpreted. Other times, the testing kit takes constant readings for 24 or 48 hours and produces a printout of the average reading during the testing period.

What are acceptable levels? It is considered that levels of 1-4 picocuries are safe. Levels higher than 4 require mitigation. Radon may be seasonal and be present in varying amounts in different seasons or, even, on different days.

Cornell Cooperative Extension or your local real estate agent can give you a pamphlet describing radon.

When purchasing a house, you can ask your Realtor to put a radon contingency in the purchase offer along with your regular home inspection contingency. This will allow you to determine if any radon is present and, if so, at what concentration. If high levels of radon are present, the contingency clause will give you the time to investigate the cost of radon mitigation alternatives.

At the present time in New York state, there are no government or financial institution regulations concerning radon and the purchase of a home.

Jerry Bass is a Broker Associate with Century 21 Wagner Realty.



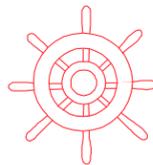
Historian's Pen

by Louise Bement



There were once many steamboats on the lake beginning with the Enterprise in 1820 and ending with the Horton about a century later. These boats were built to carry people and supplies to meet the stagecoaches at the other end of the lake and when they became old they were used as tugs to push barges up the lake to the canal.

Alice Bristol wrote in her History of Ludlowville, "These passenger boats always awakened a lively interest in the inhabitants of the farms along their course. At the first faraway sound of the slow rhythmic, booming, pond-pond someone would call, "The boat's coming!" Mother would leave her housework and the children their play to run to the front yard with spyglass in hand while father in the field stopped his horses to watch the T.D. Wilcox pass on her morning trip from Ithaca to Cayuga Bridge, and if she crossed over to Trumansburg from Norton's so much the better. And there was just as much active interest in the afternoon when the Frontenac passed in the opposite direction. At intervals, too, there were the strings of canal boats - sometimes six, eight, or more - tied one behind the other and towed by a discarded passenger boat. These aroused only a dreamy speculation - the others, active imagination and desire." Alice also wrote of the custom of the Ludlowville Sunday School to charter a boat for the all-day annual picnic at one of the shore pleasure grounds.



Bob Robinson tells us the following in his book, "Cayuga Lake Boating". The Frontenac made its maiden voyage June 4, 1870 and was used as an excursion boat until

July 27, 1907 when it burned. It is easy to think of the Frontenac as "the boat that burned and thus ended excursion boats on the lake" but it had a long and popular life before its end; thirty-seven years. It was a large boat, 135 feet long and 22 feet wide between the inside cases for the paddle-wheels. With its 27 horsepower engine it could go 15 miles an hour. The cost of the boat, when new, was \$50,000. It could carry 350 passengers and was a favorite for a regularly scheduled trip or as use as a charter boat for special occasions.

In 1892 the Frontenac left Ithaca at ten in the morning and, making all stops along the way, would be in Cayuga in time to meet the train going west at 2:25 p.m. and the one going east at 2:55 p.m. The boat would leave at three, arriving in Ithaca in time for the evening train. Meals were served on board.

In May of 1894 it was decided that the Frontenac should have more room for passengers so the upper deck was extended to the bow which was said to have added to the appearance of the boat, plus giving the extra room of a promenade deck.

The season of 1901 was about average with the first trip on Decoration Day so as to follow the Cornell-Haward races. The Kappa Alpha Fraternity had their annual cruise to the Cayuga Lake House, with 230 aboard for a banquet and dancing. The Ithaca Band sponsored its usual excursion with 350 aboard. 1902 saw the Fire Department marching to Renwick Park where 400 firemen and friends, plus the Ithaca Band, boarded the boat and went to Frontenac Beach for a clambake, returning at nine in the evening.

The Frontenac not only made headlines when she burned, she made headlines every day of her marvelous life.

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