

SUNDAY Q & A
HE DIGS FOR HOLES



G.L. BOOKER/The Kansas City Star

It's a good thing if this guy audits you.

By JAMES A. FUSSELL
The Kansas City Star

You wouldn't just throw money out your window. But if you haven't properly winterized your home, that's exactly what you might be doing. Heat pouring through improperly insulated windows, doors, walls and ceilings means more money pouring out of your wallet. Same goes for the cool escaping in summer. **Marshall Minshew** of Refresh Homes knows all about it. The 40-year-old specializes in energy audits to identify inefficiencies, saving energy and money.

Q. Tell us one way air escapes from a house that people don't think about.

A. Well, there's the stack effect. That's warm air rising. If you have a hole in the top of your house, such as a whole-house fan, or a recessed can light, that's a hole in the highest point in your house, and the hot air can go up and through those holes. So the hot air is rising up and out, and there is a pressure balance. Then the cold air is able to push in more easily through openings in the lower portion of your house.

We have openings in the lower portion of our houses? How? Where?

Oh, yes. All around the rim joists and thresholds of doors, even windows on the lower level. Utility penetrations where the gas lines or air conditioning lines come in. There are more holes than people realize. A lot of times they are unaware that those holes are an issue. I can show them that they are.

Do you have to spend a lot of money to get your house fixed?

That depends on what's wrong. If your furnace is 30 years old, that's a chunk of money, but the rate of return on it is pretty good, depending on how inefficient your old unit was. But I am not selling you furnaces or air conditioners. I tell you how inefficient things are and rank them on a priority basis. A lot of people want to do the work themselves.

Most common problem?
Recessed can lights, round lights that are recessed into the ceiling. That's an item that people just don't know is a problem. There's significant air leakage around them. Another big thing is fireplaces. I call them romantic holes in your house. They just lose heat.

Do you fix the problems?
No. I just prioritize what I think should be done first. It gives the homeowner a direction. They may think they need new windows. That may be the case, but more often than not it's not the case.

Worst thing you've found?
I've found houses that didn't have any insulation. Other times I've found houses where people thought they had the walls insulated, but there were cavities that were completely missed.

How much?
I charge \$350.
Will it pay for itself in energy savings?
Easily. But you also have to factor in comfort. You'll feel better and have a more durable house, and one that is less likely to cause rot and mold.

How much money can people be losing?
I saw one house last year that was losing \$800 per year just from air leakage (heating and cooling combined).

How do you know if you need an audit?
I haven't found a house yet that couldn't benefit from it.

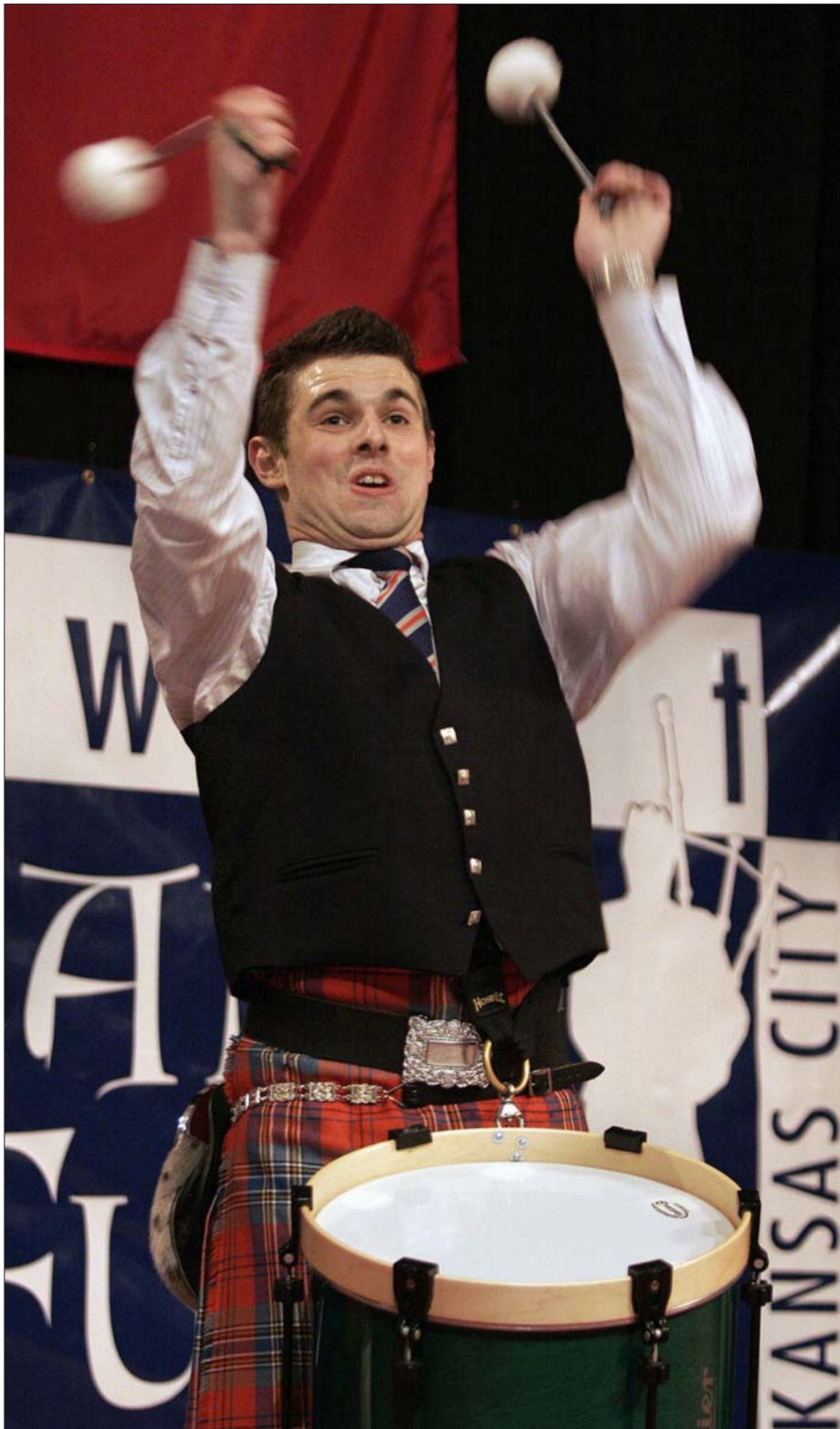


PHOTO ALBUM
SMOKIN' PIPES
(AND DRUMS)

Scenes from last weekend's "Winter Storm 2006: The Pipes & Drums Concert" at Community Christian Church (clockwise from left): High-energy drummer Tyler Fry is an audience favorite. What better place for a warmup than the kitchen? This is piper Mike Cusack of Houston. David McNally of Lenexa did a little pre-show warmup, too. Sally LoJoie (from left), Hannah Burchett, Fiona Sampson and Haley Wilson, members of the Kansas City St. Andrew Highland Dance Association, show off their moves. Men wear a "sporrán" around their waists to hold essentials, because kilts have no pockets.

Photos by SUSAN PFANNMULLER/Special to The Star



LOVE STORY

REAL ESTATE AGENT CLOSES THE DEAL

By DEBORAH SHOUSE
Special to The Star

In 1994, 29-year-old Lauren Compton moved from Boston back to Kansas City. She had ended a long-term relationship and was ready to start anew. She got a good job and decided she wanted to buy a house.

"If you need a Realtor, call David Conderman," Lauren's mother suggested.

Lauren's mom, who lived in western Kansas at the time, was best friends with David's stepmom, who lives in Manhattan, Kan. The two women had been close since college. They kept in touch, and Lauren's mom knew and liked David. Lauren really wanted to do "this house-buying thing on my own." But she soon realized she needed assistance and called David.

David, 28, knew all about Lauren. Her mom had spent the last two Christmases with David's family. When Lauren broke up with her boyfriend, her mom had urged David to fly to Boston to meet her daughter. But Lauren reconciled with the boyfriend temporarily, and David never made the trip.

David showed Lauren houses and asked her out for dinner.

"He was cute and nice, but I wondered, 'Does he ask out all his clients?'" Lauren says.

Still, she agreed. Then David learned his parents were going to be in town. Lauren's mom was coming to town. Their first date was with both sets of parents. They continued dating. When Lauren found the right

house, David was ready: He produced a celebratory picnic of Brie, grapes and Champagne. Although Lauren had a dinner date with someone else, David urged her to cancel it. She did, and they have been together ever since.

"Lauren is fun, exciting, independent and very pretty," David says.

"David totally wooed me," Lauren says. "He brought me flowers, wrote me love notes and sang love songs to my voice mail. I was smitten."

In September 1995, David took Lauren to Carmel, Calif., where he planned to propose. He had the ring in his pocket, but things kept interfering with his plans. He persuaded Lauren to stay an extra day so he could take her to a sunset beach, kneel in the sand and surprise her with the ring. She said a happy and tearful "Yes." They were married in May 1996. Their parents were delighted.

Today David and Lauren live in Prairie Village. David is a residential real estate agent with Keller Williams Realty. Lauren owns Restoration by Design, LLC, which rehabs homes. They have two sons.

"Lauren lets me be who I am," David says. "Being married has grounded me. Lauren is so supportive of me, and I have learned to be as supportive of her."

"David is so fun, outgoing, smart and so attentive and loving," Lauren says. "He is the best dad. He is even better than I thought he was."

Have a love story to share? Send a brief description to sundayfyi@kcstar.com.



JENNIFER HACK/The Kansas City Star
David and Lauren Conderman

FIVE W'S AND AN H

BOOTED BACHELORETTE READY TO GET ON WITH LIFE

Lisa Forbes had never been overseas before appearing on ABC's "The Bachelor: Paris." Unfortunately, she didn't get to stay long.

The 24-year-old from Overland Park was booted with the first batch of bachelorettes. (That episode aired Jan. 9.) The day after getting the ax instead of the rose, she took a fun-yet-fleeting tour of the City of Light, including the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs-Elysees.

"It was short, but I was glad I got to see a little bit of the city," Forbes said. "And the people were phenomenal, draped in designer clothes, picture perfect."

Before "The Bachelor" came into her life, Forbes was an IT recruiter here and enjoyed her year as Miss Kansas USA 2004. Now she's considering her options.

☆☆☆

WHO do you look up to?

Definitely my mother. She's been a strong role model my whole life. And Shandi Finnessey, who was Miss USA. We got a chance to know each other. She's so charismatic, a person you know could rule the world. Very strong ethics and moral. I look up to her.

WHAT do you think of people who go on reality TV shows?

It honestly varies from person to person. Some people go on for the wrong reasons. I think the biggest thing for people to remember is that everything you do is taped and shown to the whole world. And to take it with a grain of salt. You have to come home and go on with your life. Chalk it up to a good experience, and you'll be fine.

WHEN was the last time you wished you could get away, like the airline commercial?

When I got home from taping "The Bachelor." I didn't want to go back to work. I didn't think I was going to get cut so soon. I didn't tell anyone I was home. I took a week and hibernated.

WHERE do you go to get recharged?

Always the gym gets me recharged, even a good jog outside or walking the dog clears my mind. Especially if it's a nice day, I drive out south where there are open fields and horses. I used to show horses when I was young. That gets me revived.

WHY not move to one of the coasts?

It's definitely an option. I'll explore the pageant industry, training or coaching, and I would stay here for that. But I may explore other avenues, like going out to Los Angeles, the entertainment media capital of the world. Right now it's about 50-50.

HOW fast do you drive?

It depends where I am. If I'm in Overland Park, the police are in abundance and I stay 5 or 7 miles an hour over the speed limit. But I was going to Nebraska to judge a pageant, and I was more like 20 miles over. I got stopped, but the trooper didn't give me a ticket. I told him I was there to judge a pageant and he said, "Well, all right. Have a good day."

—Edward M. Eveld/The Star

To suggest someone for this feature, send e-mail to tengle@kcstar.com.



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