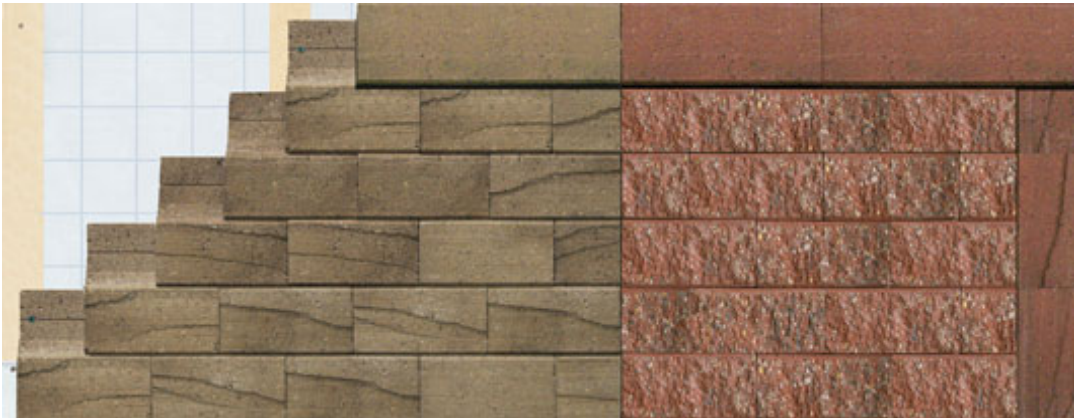


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# HOUSE WISE

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*“Do you really want  
vinyl?”*

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## The Un-Brick

*By Elizabeth Guinn*

So you're building a house, it's time to pick what type of siding to put on it and you just can't make a decision. There are a lot of options in the realm of vinyl, but do you really want vinyl? There are lots of color and style options, but the off-gassing for vinyl is huge, and it isn't all that durable unless you get the really

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## Dan's Desk – Resolving, again.

*By Dan Guinn*

In our January issue last year I tried to get you to resolve to change a few things in your house to save money on your energy bills. They were all small changes, little things to make a little difference. After all, any amount of motion in the right direction is better than no movement at all.

Last year I prodded you to start changing your air filters every 3 months. I have been doing some research on this and talking with my favorite HVAC guy Gary Minerve about it. I also have been closely watching my own house filters and making some

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expensive stuff; but the installation is so simple. Dryvit and stucco finishes which look great, but they are pretty thin and a bump with a lawn tractor or a ladder and you've got damage that you have to call a professional to repair. And have you heard about what woodpeckers do to that stuff?

Brick is a nice durable option, holds up great, requires no maintenance for years, and adds insulating value to the house; but the labor costs on brick are significant, and you have to have the foundation set up to have a ledge to hold the brick from the start.

So what do you do when you want a maintenance free finish that is extremely durable and that maybe you could even install yourself? Have you looked into Novabrik?

A couple that reads our newsletter brought us some of these Novabriks to take a look at, and we were thoroughly impressed with the product. This product looks like brick, feels like brick, and maintains like brick, but it doesn't install like brick. I love products where there is a possibility of me installing the stuff, myself.

The reason why there is a possibility of me installing this stuff, myself, is because it doesn't require any mortar to install it. The bricks are interlocking and simply stack on top of each other. Every third row or so you drill a hole in them and screw them to the plywood. The only tools you need for installation are a hammer drill and a chop saw with a diamond blade. There are special pieces to go around windows, and they even have corner pieces just like vinyl siding. The stuff is made out of concrete, which is a great easily renewable resource, and they come in smooth or split face bricks. The range of colors is remarkable; this list of colors on the website covers everything you can dream up. I was particularly impressed with one that looked like sandstone.

They even have varied sizes to cover any application. So how does this stuff save you money and energy? It acts just like brick in its insulating properties, and it can be purchased in lighter colors to avoid overheating in the summertime.



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observations. I believe that there are certain times of the year where every three months is not enough. How often you change your filters should be tied more to how often your unit is running instead of just tying it to the calendar. Since your unit runs more at the height of winter and again in summer, the filters should be changed once a month. I know mine have been looking pretty bad after 3 or 4 weeks and I don't even have any carpet which is the biggest producer of dust particles.

Of course, telling you to ramp up your filter changes considerably means that you are going to increase your use and disposal of a non recyclable product. I was challenged recently by Pat Weber of Williamsburg, (the most amazing business coach in the world!!) a reader of this newsletter. She sent me a link to a short online video called The Story of Stuff ( [www.thestoryofstuff.com](http://www.thestoryofstuff.com) ). After my wife showed me the video Pat had sent, I was convicted about the huge amount of stuff I purchase and throw away that can't be recycled. This prompted me to do a little more research.

I ended up at [www.allergybuyersclub.com](http://www.allergybuyersclub.com). This website did a comparison of different electronic filters that you could put directly on you furnace. How this works is you quit using the paper filters all together and place one electronic filter at the unit itself. The best rated filter on their website that was completely reusable and permanent was the Airscreen 500 Electrostatic Furnace and Air Conditioner Filters. The upside of this product is that it picks up more of the tiny particles that are in your home and can be washed off and reused without any further outlay of cash. A good air filter for your home will run you \$15 or more. I have five returns in my house to buy filters for; outlaying just \$140 one time not including installation could save me quite a bit in the long run.

The down side to one of these filters is that you will have some build up of dust and particle in your return ducts over time. Even though these devices use electricity, the amount is nominal and the increase in air quality and never having to stand in the filter aisle at Lowe's tying to remember what size all those different returns are makes it more than worth it. Spend a little now, save a ton in the long run and stop sending those used filters to the landfills!

Last year I also attempted to get you to change just one light bulb in your house to a compact fluorescent bulb, just one. That wasn't too painful was it? So let's take a second step in the right direction. Find five more lights you can replace with a CFL and watch your energy usage drop. I received a lot of emails after last years article regarding the mercury in CFL's and the possibility of them breaking. I changed almost all of my light bulbs out for

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Contact Elizabeth and Dan Guinn at [info@danguinnhomes.com](mailto:info@danguinnhomes.com) for the free report, "Top Ten Best Ideas to Reduce Utility Bills and Spend the Savings on What You Really Want!" Just send me an email requesting a copy and I will speed one out to you!

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CFL's last year and I haven't had any problems at all. If you think about it, when was the last time you broke a light bulb anyway? It is a heavy metal and you do want to be careful to clean it up responsibly should one break, but codes today require that all of the lighting fixtures in your living space be covered or recessed and the chance of accidental breakage is slim. The one location that I do have an uncovered light bulb is in my attic. If you happen to have one of these, keep that one an incandescent bulb and that way if you knock it and break it, all you have to do is vacuum it up.

I also had a lot of emails about a lack of color selection on CFL's. I think you'd be surprised what's actually available today as far as colors go. If you haven't looked into them in a while, it's time to head to Wal-Mart and take a look at what they have to offer. We love them and have no complaints at all.

I'd love to hear from you about your New Years resolution regarding your house. Did you try any of my suggestions last year? How did they go? Do you plan on giving any of these a try? Let me know what your up to, I'd love to include you in an article. And thanks to Pat for the amazing video, don't forget to check it out. Thanks for reading.

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*Taking you from Dreams to Reality*  
*Psalms 127:1a*



*Dan Quinn Homes*

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