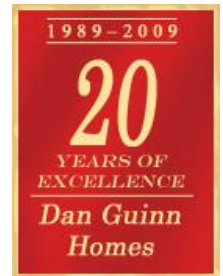


http://www

# HOUSE WISE

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## Paper Where?

By Elizabeth Guinn

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*It's Time for an Audit!*

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## Inside This Issue

1 Paper Where?

Dan's Desk

I have been doing some research into Paperstone countertops and I have been pleased with the results. Paperstone Countertops come in three different lines. The first is the Original line which is made from 100% post consumer recycled cardboard. The second is the Certified which is made from 100% post consumer recycled office paper and then there is the Virgin which is not recycled at all but is FSC certified. The color palette on these countertops is beautiful, full of dark rich colors. The Paperstone product is also a solid surface countertop which means that the color goes all the way through and allows you to choose any edge profile and still see nothing but the beautiful color that you have chosen for your kitchen counters.

These countertops are extremely durable as well with compression strengths that rival concrete. Which is amazing since this is made from paper and a non petroleum resin. Even though

## Dan's Desk

Please see *Paper* on page 2

By Dan Guinn

Have you had the feeling that you have done this before? Many times we are approached by clients that absolutely positively know what is wrong with their house. I just keep hearing the same statement "I know the windows are leaky but....." The fact is many houses have leaky windows but usually windows are not the major cause of Energy loss in a house. I have found houses that need new windows but in most cases it turns out to be something entirely different. This is a common problem with energy efficiency; you cannot always see where

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From *Paper* page 1

formaldehyde is used in the manufacturing process, Paperstone countertops are certified to not release any harmful VOC's including formaldehyde. According to the website ([http://www.paperstoneproducts.com/ps\\_benefits\\_key\\_points.php](http://www.paperstoneproducts.com/ps_benefits_key_points.php)), the product is great for cutting boards so it stands up to cutting directly on the surface which is a plus.

I found a local distributor for the product in Richmond at the Eco Supply Store which carries all items green. I'm thinking a field trip is in order. Being the DIYers that we are, however, the best part is that I found a Handyman's special area of the website where they were getting rid of a fairly large supply of the countertops at a greatly reduced rate. The comments stated that some of the widths were uncommon sizes and some of the colors were not true or had some issue of that nature. That just gives them more character, I love clearance sales!

The biggest question that comes to my mind is how does it hold up in standard kitchen use? It does appear to be a tough product but what about setting a hot pot on it, after all it is paper? What about spills? The manufacturer states on the website that while this product may not be good for extremely wet uses, it works great for the standard kitchen use where it gets wet or washed frequently. And I did find reference to the fact that it had a Class "A" fire rating so it isn't going to catch on fire but it did mention being careful in areas where a large hot pot might overhang the countertop while cooking so heat must not be its friend. Every type of solid surface countertop has its particular issues the key is finding the one that works for you. This just might be the one that works for me.



Call Today to Schedule your Energy Audit

Taking you from  
Dreams to Reality  
Psalms 127:1a

**HERS**  
Home Energy Rating System



From *Dan* page 1

## Elizabeth Guinn

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you are losing energy. To be absolutely sure the windows are causing you energy loss they need to be tested. Testing a house always reveals where the problem areas really are.

How do I tell if my windows have air leaks? The best way to tell is with a blower door test. The blower door is a powerful fan that pulls air out of your house. This lowers the pressure inside your house and causes all the air leaks to be accentuated. During the blower door test, leaky windows will be quite obvious; you can feel the air with your hand as you move through the house. Under the right conditions we also can see the air movement with the thermal imager. Perhaps the most important part of this test is that the fan does not care where the leaks are. Whether it is the windows or a detached supply line under your house it finds them. What is usually the case, the major air leaks are not the windows at all.

The blower door also measures the amount of air moving out through the fan. This gives me a quantitative number for the total amount of air leakage. With this information I can determine how the air leakage compares to the size of your house. Of course all air leakage is energy loss, but a small amount of air leakage for a very big house will not affect efficiency as much as it would a small house.

There are some other low tech ways to tell if a window is leaky. Like condensation on or around the edges of the glass. This may be a sign that the windows are leaking air into the house especially in the winter. This also may indicate high moisture levels in the house as well. So you see the problem with this litmus test is condensation may not be an indication of air leaks at all. Another way to test your windows is to wait for a windy day and inspect for air leaks while the wind is blowing against the window. This test will work well, but the wind will not always blow at a convenient time of day or on the correct side of the house. Who really wants to get up in the middle of the night during a raging wind storm to check their windows? These methods may help you to diagnose problem windows but will not tell you anything about the rest of your house. If you are serious about finding the real culprits, give me a call.

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