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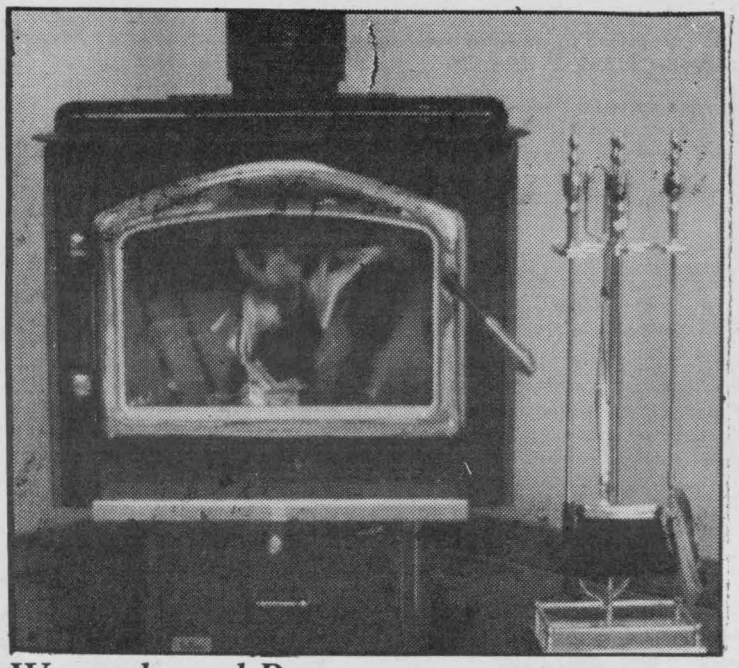
HOME IMPROVEMENT

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A Special Supplement

Published By "THE CHIEFTAIN" WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2001

The warmth from a wood stove



Warmth and Beauty

A glass door allows the room to be bathed in the glow of a crackling fire. Wood burning stoves are popular for both their efficiency and their delightful ambiance. Safety is vital to wood burners.

Once you experience a pellet stove, it's easy to understand why people rave about these efficient and unique home heaters that generate an automated, economical and earth-friendly wood heat...and all without firewood! For just pennies an hour, a pellet stove can deliver a deep, penetraiting warmth that provides independence from high heating bills while emitting almost no wood smoke. And, with tremendous flexibility in installation and sizing, pellet stoves are a sophisticated choice for convenient heat that helps protect the environment and doesn't break the bank.

Help Take Control of Heating Costs

Pellet stoves are the perfect choice for people that often experience high home heating bills due to fluctuating energy costs. In fact, pellet stoves are often installed in homes as secondary heat sources to help maintain control over heating expenses. The reason is the fuel. Pellet stoves burn economical pellets made from recycled sawdust. The economy of pellets is due to the low cost of materials and the efficiency of the manufacturing processes, as well as the ability for people to lock in an entire year of fuel costs before beginning the heating season.

Efficient Heat and Minimal Emissions

Pellet stoves are efficient home heaters thanks to state-of-the-art technology that helps control the fuel-to-air ratio within the stove and ensures almost complete combustion of the fuel. This technology helps to generate minimal wood smoke, making pellet stoves the lowest emission solid-fuel burning hearth products available today and a popular choice in areas where winter air quality is an issue.

Automated Wood Burning

A pellet stove is an automated wood burner. Pellet stoves operate with an easy-to-use convenience while providing a rich, radiant and convection heat. To use a pellet stove, simply load a supply of pellets into the hopper and start the stove. Once the stove is operating, an automated feed system delivers the wood pellets into a burn chamber within the stove where combustion air is forced through the fire creating a mini furnace. In many pellet stoves, the ignition system is also automatic, increasing the convenience factor.

Easily Installed and Maintained

The power-venting feature of a pellet stove allows for installation almost anywhere in a home. The key to installation is placing the stove near an electrical outlet. All pellet stoves require electricity to operate, although battery packs are available for many stoves just in case the power goes out. Once installed, pellet stoves are easy to maintain. Routine tasks include filling the hopper with pellets, emptying the ash pan weekly, periodic cleaning of the burn pot, hopper, ash traps and glass, and annual professional service of the entire unit before the start of each cold season.

Selecting a Pellet Stove

Much like any other appliance, it is important to spend the time to choose the right pellet stove. Before you make your final decision, visit a hearth specialty retailer in your area for experienced advice. A hearth specialty retailer is a trained pellet stove expert. He or she can arrange for installation by a professional installer, such as a HEARTH certified professional, and provide a resource for where to purchase pellets in your area. Hearth specialty retailers are also the best source of information about how

Please turn to page 11

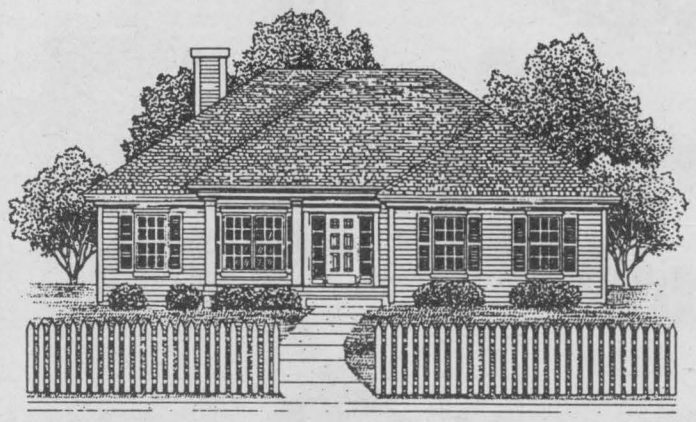
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Getting in step with your renovation contractor

How well you work with your renovation contractor depends partly on you! One way to get the most out of the experience is to learn as much as you can about home renovating techniques and practices before the work begins - or better still, before you choose a contractor.

If you want to get to know your house better, EnerGuide for Houses is a good place to start. The service, operated by Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency, can help you find a qualified energy advisor who will perform a professional assessment of your home's energy needs. He or she will look at many energy aspects of your home, including insulation and heating systems, and will conduct a "blower door" test to find out where the air is leaking in and out of your home. Based on this assessment, the advisor will put together a customized plan to reduce your heating and cooling costs. Along the way, you'll pick up valuable knowledge and tips that will help you plan and guide a professional home renovation.

EnerGuide for Houses advisors start out with the understanding that the house is a system, in which a change in one component can have unexpected impacts in other parts. They're trained to pay close attention to the way a home works - including the flow of heat, moisture and air from room to room - not just how it's constructed or what heating system it uses.

An EnerGuide for Houses advisor can help you decide what to do about:

~ uneven heat distribution in your home;

~ moisture problems that could lead to asthma or allergies for you or your family, or cause major damage to the building structure;

~ drafts and air leaks that can make the house less comfortable and more expensive to heat and cool; and

~ replacing an older furnace.

The advisor will point out opportunities to build energy efficiency into your next renovation. Depending on your home and your preferences, the best option might be to install high-performance windows and doors, air seal when you renovate the basement or attic, or upgrade the insulation under any new exterior siding you have planned.

The bottom line is that there is an excellent source of knowledge available about energy efficiency in the home. EnerGuide for Houses advisors are the unbiased experts to call for information on home energy use and comfort, and it's easy to contact them to arrange a visit. Since energy efficiency improvements are most affordable when they're piggybacked with other renovations, with just one visit the advisor can help you plan the work behind years of energy and dollar savings.

For more information on EnerGuide for Houses, visit the program's Web site at http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/houses. For the name of an EnerGuide advisor in your area, visit the Web site or call 1 800 387-2000 toll-free.

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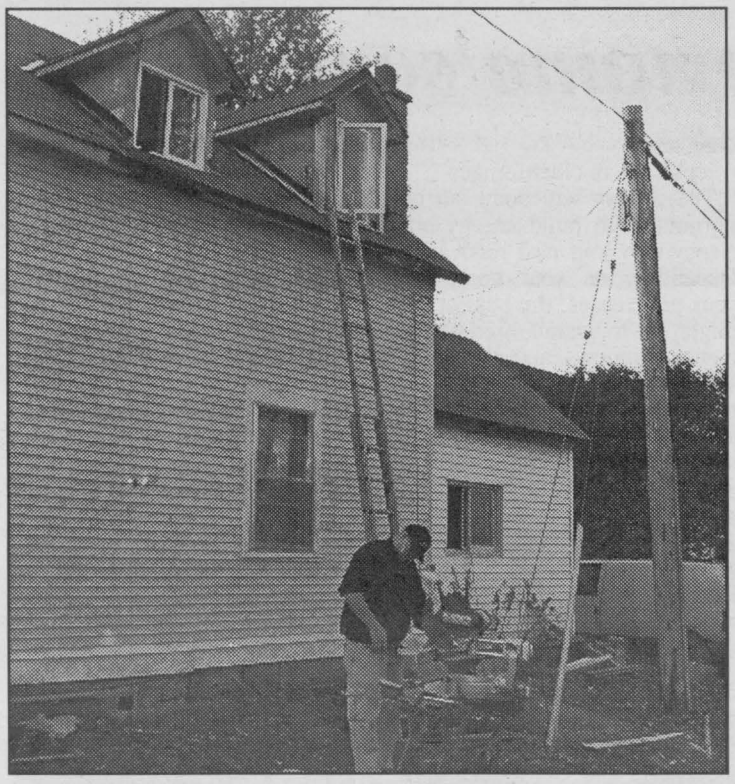


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Siding for Winter

Jamie is busy measuring his next piece of siding. Fall renovations are being completed everywhere. The weather has been great and the do-it-yourselfers use every bit of sunlight to get the job done. Siding transforms older homes into new looking ones in a hurry at a reasonable cost.

Check your smoke alarms

by Treena Shamber

At the end of October, Canadians put their clocks back one hour, to Standard Time. For several years now, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs and First Alert, the leading smoke alarm manufacturer, have declared the two days we change our clocks as National Smoke Alarm Days... to urge Canadians to check and/or change their smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm batteries at the same time they change their clocks.

It makes so much sense to combine these activities. After all, a smoke alarm that isn't working is as useless as an empty carton of milk, or a car that's out of gas. In fact, it's just plain dangerous. Fires are not patient creatures... they don't wait for you to put new batteries in a smoke alarm before they start.

The good news is that more than nine out of ten Canadian homes have at least one smoke alarm. (It should be ten out of ten, but some people just don't concern themselves with safety, I guess.)

The bad news is, many of those smoke alarms aren't working because their batteries are dead, or because someone "borrowed" the battery and didn't replace it.

A fire can start in many places in your home. Most people think it's just careless smoking, but with so many people not smoking anymore, that risk has been greatly reduced. No, fires can start from curtains sitting on heaters, from mistakes on the stove, from gasoline spilled in a workshop or garage, from kids playing with matches, from candles left unattended.

Without smoke alarms, and handy fire extinguishers, you'll have very little hope of saving yourself, your family, and your prized possessions in the event of fire.

So before you change your clocks on October 28th, check your smoke alarms and make sure you know where your fire extinguisher is.

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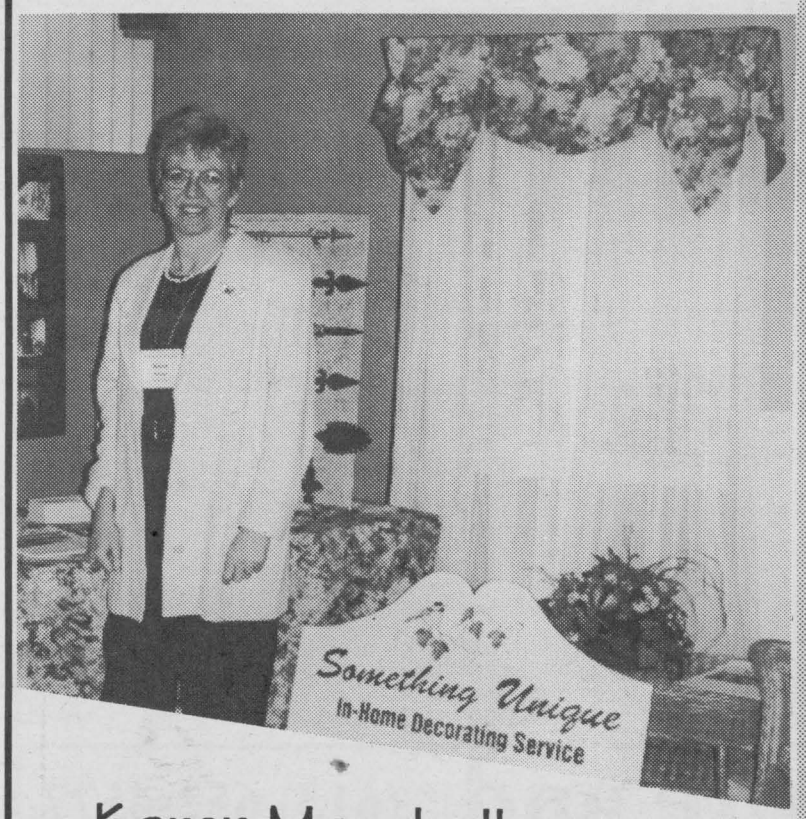


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Take care to protect your new home's warranty

Fall is the ideal time to begin readying your new home for the long Canadian winter. By conducting your home's maintenance ahead of time, you ensure that your winter will be spent relaxing by the warmth of the fireplace rather than caulking the drafts around your home's exterior doors and windows while standing knee-deep in snow. More importantly, your efforts will not only protect one of life's most substantial investments, but the warranty coverage you receive from the Ontario New Home Warranty Program (ONHWP) as well.

Begin by airing out the basement and crawl spaces to prevent mold and mildew. Have the furnace and humidifier professionally serviced, and remove all dust and dirt from around the furnace, registers and condensing unit. Check the chimney and venting system to ensure they are both in safe operating condition. Inspect and oil the exhaust ventilation fans and heat recovery ventilators. In the kitchen, clean your range hood filter to prevent grease buildup, thus eliminating any potential fire hazards.



Examine doors and windows for drafts and apply weatherstripping where necessary. Exterior doors also need protection from shrinkage and warping due to exposure. Invest in storm doors to protect non-insulated entrance doors and improve heat conservation.

Outside, shut off the garden hose and drain it from the inside to prevent freezing and bursting. Also check exterior wood finishes, paint and siding. Look for signs of moisture penetrating wood, or blistering and peeling paint, as this can lead to water seepage. Replace worn window caulking to prevent drafts. Clear eavestroughs, gutters and downspouts of debris, ensuring drainage from the roof is unobstructed, preventing water from leaking into the interior. Do this for the window wells also. Keep them free of leaves to allow water to drain properly toward the footing drainage system. Lot drainage systems are designed to direct water away from the house. Walk around your property and examine the driveway and walkways for cracks that, with water penetration and freezing, could lead to larger, more expensive problems.

Next, tackle the roof by checking any vents, louvers and chimney caps for any birds' nests or animals that may be obstructing their openings. Also inspect the roof's surface and shingles for damage.

Finally, fertilize your lawn or plant a new one. Autumn is the ideal time to do so. And don't forget to protect your shrubs and bushes against the cold with burlap. If you take care to do this - and all other proper home maintenance - come spring, your garden and new home will thank you.

For more seasonal home maintenance tips, log on to the Internet and download ONHWP's seasonal checklists at www.newhome.on.ca/consumers/aftermovingin/maintenance/seasonalchecklist/index.html

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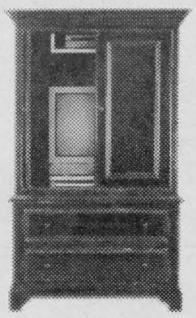
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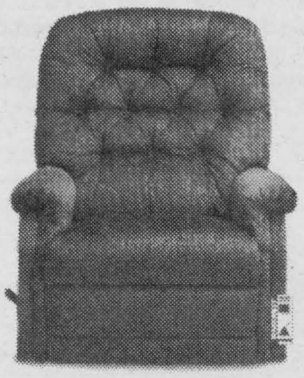
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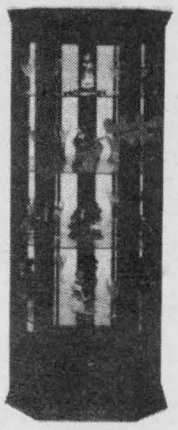
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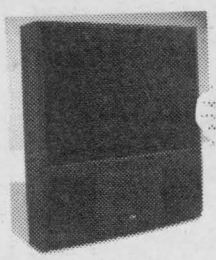
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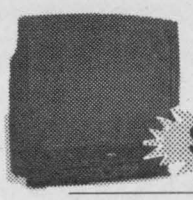


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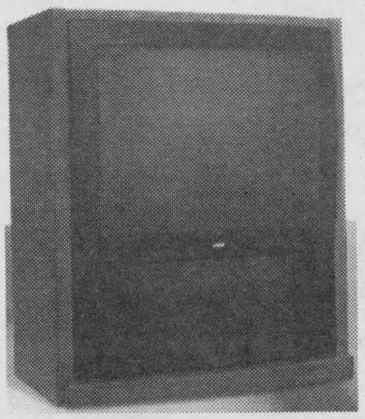
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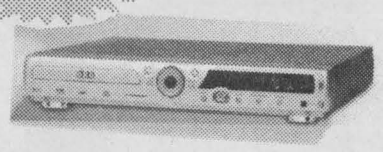


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You don't always have to see red when it comes to brick

When you think of brick do you see red? Well think again. Modern technology has provided Canadian home buyers with a wide choice when it comes to brick colour and texture. While classic red clay brick continues to be a popular choice, other styles and colours stand out as hot new looks in brick.

With the growing interest in heritage look homes, there is a growing demand for reclaim look-alike and heritage-style bricks.

Reclaim look-alike brick has the distinctive look of century old brick, with its rolled edge and softer hues. Colours range from salmon and grey to sand, with accents in hues of charcoal, ivory and copper.

The advantage of reclaim look-alike brick is that the integrity of the brick is guaranteed. "When original, century old brick is "reclaimed" or reused, there is no indication where in the wall it was used or how old it is," said Frank Buck, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Canada Brick, Canada's largest brick manufacturer. "Reclaim gives you peace of mind while retaining the traditional look consumers want," Buck added.

In addition to the reclaim look, consumer demand for heritage colours is on the rise. Canada Brick's Heritage Beige combines soft pastel tones with a unique pressed bark texture. "Heritage Beige and Heritage Grey remain our two top-selling bricks," said Frank Buck. The heritage series is also available in rust, brown and antique.

Discover a world of brick colour, texture and style on the Canada Brick website at www.canadabrick.com.

- News Canada

Dressing up the table for fall

Once the heat of summer is over, we start to think of moving indoors to the warmth of fall and winter entertaining. Getting together with friends and family is the perfect way to create shared memories and is the ideal time to bring out the "good china" to create a splendid backdrop for the wonderful meals that form the heart of any celebration.

One of the newest items in formal tableware is the 9" luncheon plate... often lavishly decorated to complement special foods. It's a wonderful multi-functional plate that is perfect for dessert, salad, appetizers, breakfast, or as a smaller dinner plate for the younger members of the party!

Looking forward to cozy fall entertaining and the busy holiday season is the perfect excuse to use the beautiful pieces of china and crystal that may be kept behind the glass of your china cabinet - why not enjoy your fine treasures more often!

- News Canada

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Home Security: Make your home criminal proof

Installing deadbolt locks on each door of your house is often considered the most important - and cost effective - security measure you can take. Back doors and side doors are often overlooked by homeowners, but they are not overlooked by the criminals.

"Home intruders generally look for two elements when selecting a house," says Schlage Canada, specialists in locks and home security products. "They have to be able to get in and out quickly, and they must remain unseen. If either one of these conditions do not exist, odds are they will move on to the next house."

Deadbolts are generally made of steel and that means they can't be cut, or picked, bent or broken. The deadbolts manufactured by Schlage for example, have pick-resistant cylinders, a full one-inch deadbolt, plus a steel door frame reinforcer with three-inch screws to guard against attacks. Deadbolt locks are an easy first step, but there is more you can do, suggests Schlage. For example:

Don't advertise your absence

Put away items like sports equipment, lawn mowers, portable grills and bicycles. By leaving possessions outside, burglars will wonder what you have inside.

If you go on vacation

Notify a neighbour or friend so they can keep a watchful eye on your house. Have your mail and newspaper delivery stopped, or collected, and arrange to have your yard maintained, or your driveway shoveled. Ask a neighbour to park a car in your driveway to make it appear that you are home.

Lock your car while it's in the driveway

Protect your car from being stolen and also items from being stolen, like a garage door opener, giving thieves access to your home. Make sure that you include a deadbolt on the door leading from your garage to your house.

Trim hedges and shrubs

The worst thing you can do is give an intruder a place to hide while breaking into your home. Keep all of your bushes trimmed and your hedges low.

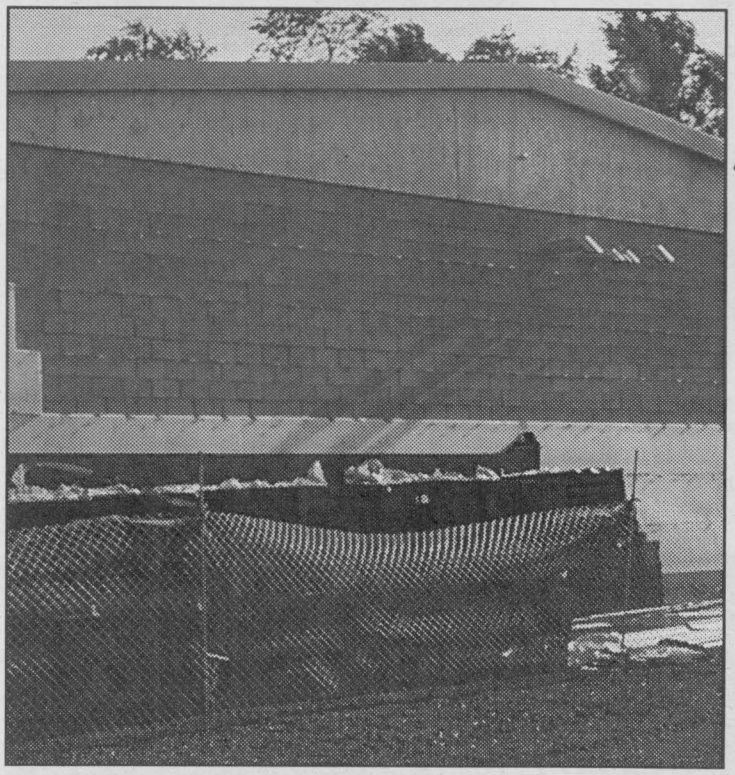
Secure your windows

A common entry point for burglars is a ground level window at the side or rear of the house.

Join Neighborhood Watch

Community policing programs, like Neighborhood Watch, have shown great success in reducing property crime around the world. Burglars know when they are being watched and they don't like it.

- News Canada



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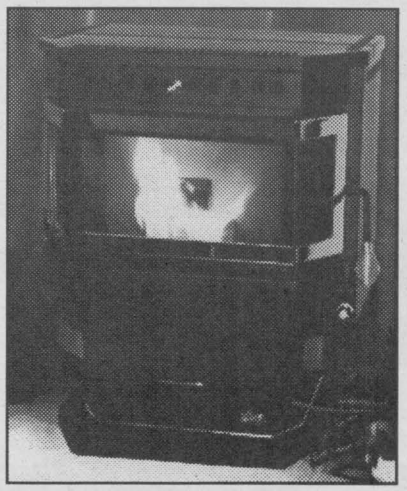
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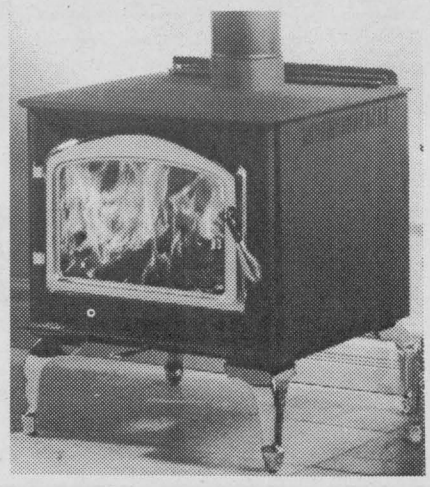
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With cold winter weather just around the corner, heating bills can cost a fortune. But no need to head to the bank just yet - homeowners can have an energy efficient home just by adding insulation. Try these easy, cost-effective measures to make your home more energy efficient.

Add Another Layer of Attic Insulation

Adding more insulation to your attic is an affordable way to help cut heating costs and make your home more comfortable. Use PINK® Fiber Glass Insulation for Attics and select R-40 to get the greatest insulating power. As a general rule, fill your attic with 11 to 12 inches of attic insulation to stay warm.

Install a Programmable Thermostat

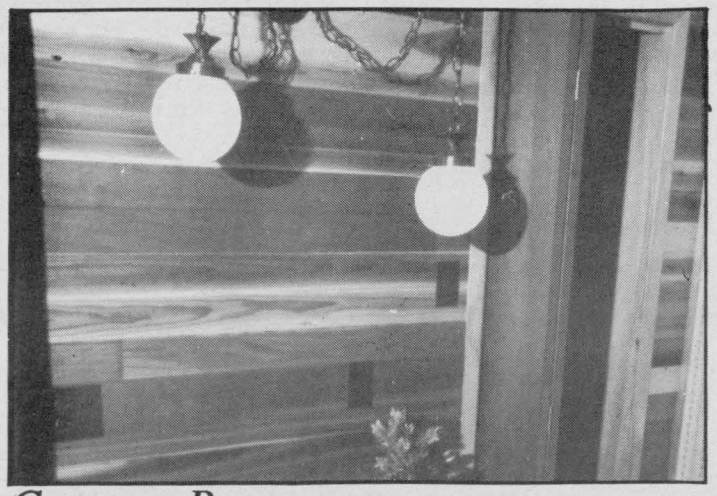
Why heat the house when nobody is home? A programmable thermostat can automatically lower and raise your home's air temperature when you are at work or sleeping. By simply turning your thermostat from 72¼ F down to 65¼ F for eight hours a day, you can save as much as 10 percent on your annual heating and cooling costs.

Wrap Pipes & Water Heater

Owens Corning's Multi-Purpose Insulation is the perfect size to insulate around pipes. It's the same as PINK® Fiber Glass Insulation only in a convenient small bag. Insulating pipes and heater will reduce heat loss and minimize the irritating sound of running water.

For more information on your home's insulating system, call the Owens Corning answer center at 1-800-GET-PINK® or visit the website at www.owenscorning.com.

- *News Canada*



Create a Room

Whatever your needs, you too can create just the right atmosphere. Colour and texture, wood or paper, whatever feels right is in all likelihood just what you need. Don't be afraid to be different. Splashes of colour are terrific and dare to be a bit crazy, it is your home, do what you want.

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3. Save 30%. Aruba 2-piece sink. Faucet extra. 63-3306X. Reg. 49.99..... ..... Set 34.99

4. Save 15.00. Iris 2-piece toilet. Seat sold separately. 63-3323X. Reg. 79.99 ..... Set 64.99

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CONTINUED

Wood stove

Continued from page 2

to correctly operate a pellet stove and what is necessary for proper maintenance.

Pellet Stove Checklist

* Type: Pellet stoves are classified by the amount of heat they generate - high versus low output.
* Size: The physical size of a pellet stove is less important than the heat-generating capacity of the stove and the size of the fuel hopper. A small stove can heat a large space but might not hold more than a day's worth of pellets.
* Location: Pellet stoves require less installation space than other types of stoves and can be located as little as three inches from a wall, depending on the model. A pellet stove must also be installed a specific distance away from combustible surfaces and materials, such as drapes and doors, and be placed on non-combustible surface such as a hearth pad.
* Venting: Since pellet stoves are power vented they can be installed almost anywhere in home, including through the ceiling, through a wall, or into an existing masonry chimney as long as the installation includes at least three feet of vertical chimney. Pellet stove chimneys are unique and are usually three or four inches in diameter. The chimney is also lined with stainless steel.
* Features: There are three different types of ignition systems available in pellet stoves: standard (requiring the use of starter gel and a match); self-starting (where the user pushes a button to start the stove or uses a remote control); and fully automatic (where the stove is controlled by a thermostat and cycles on and off depending on the heat level selected). Other optional features include self-cleaning glass, self-cleaning burn pots, and deep pedestal ash pans. Some stove models even have battery back-up systems for when the power goes out (since pellet stoves require electricity to operate).
* Style: Full bay view doors and windows trimmed in gold or black are examples of the styling options available for pellet stoves. Porcelain or cast iron finishes are also available options with many models of pellet stoves.
* Installation: To ensure the safe and reliable installation of a pellet stove, the Hearth Products Association recommends that people use a hearth specialty retailer and a professional installer, such as a HEARTH certified professional, to perform installation tasks. These professionals will obtain the necessary building permits, make sure that the necessary three feet of vertical chimney is used in the installation and ensure the stove is installed on a hearth pad.
* Maintenance: Pellet stoves are simple to maintain, but routine tasks must be performed regularly to ensure proper function. These tasks include emptying the ash drawer, cleaning the burn pot, hopper, ash traps and glass, and scheduling professional service inspections each year before the start of the cold season. In addition, the Hearth Products Association recommends that chimneys and vents be inspected annually (and cleaned as necessary) by a chimney sweep certified by the Wood Energy Technical Transfer Inc.
*Fuel Requirements: Two grades of wood pellet fuel are available for pellet stoves: premium and standard. The difference between the two is their percentage of in organic ash content. There is significantly less stove maintenance with the use of premium pellet fuel. There are also pellet stoves that can burn pellets with corn, a growing trend in home heating.
*Average Cost: The price of the appliance itself is only part of the total cost of owning a pellet stove. Other considerations are the cost of the chimney and installation, annual fuel costs and annual maintenance.

Courtesy of, Hearth Products Association

Preparing your home for winter

Fall is here, and it's time to get your home ready for the long, cold winter months ahead.

"Canadians spend significant time and money preparing their homes for winter," says George Hughes, Manager of Home Improvements, Enbridge Home Services. "Our goal this fall is to help homeowners out, with energy-smart ideas and affordable solutions," he says.

Eliminate drafts

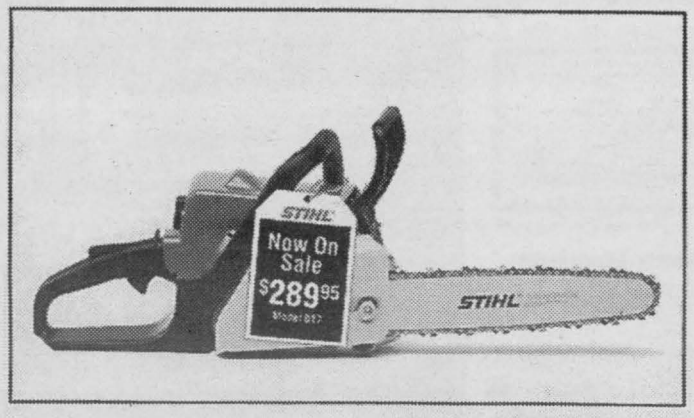
Tip: Replace your exterior doors

"Steel doors are three times more efficient than wood, because they reduce energy costs by eliminating drafts," says Mr. Hughes.

Keep heat in, costs down

Tip: Insulate, insulate, insulate!

"A properly insulated attic can save you as much as 15 per cent of your home's total heat loss," says Mr. Hughes.



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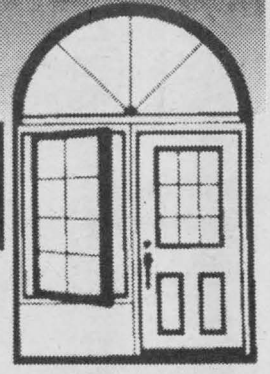
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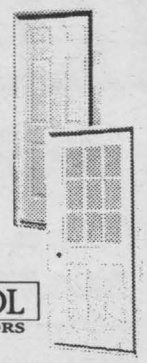
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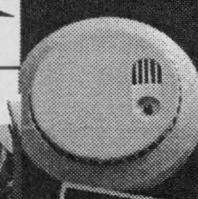
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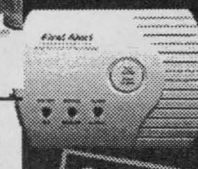
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