Spring Home Improvement

YOUR GUIDE FOR THOSE SPRING HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

INSIDE

Making your own frames interesting experience 3

Review all the options before taking the plunge 8

It's Spring and time to get back into garden 8

Does your home need a new roof? 10

Renovations in progress cause disruptions

When your home becomes a construction zone, the mess can well make you wonder if you will ever get things back to normal again. To ensure that the minor conveniences of a remodelling project do not become major headaches, discuss clean up with your contractor before the actual work starts.

Once the decision has been made on who will actually do the work, a pre-construction meeting is well worth everyone's time. Bringing together the key players in the renovations, perhaps most importantly, it brings you up to speed on what to expect and when to figure each step will take place in the remodelling process. An overview of the entire process will allow you to develop a plan that will minimize disruption. It also gives you the chance to make perfectly clear what you are expecting in the way of professional conduct from your workers.

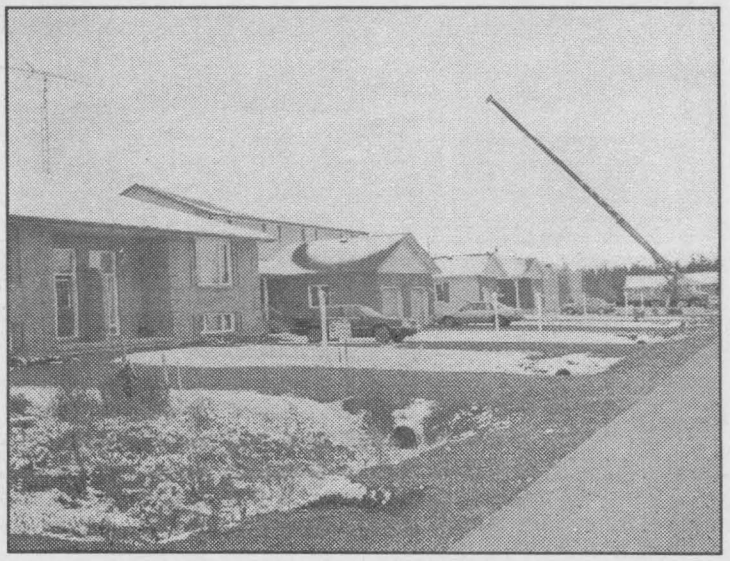
It is also a great idea to get the family together to go over the realities of renovating, like the noise, the dust, the limited access to the parts being renovated and what you are expecting from each family member during the disruption.

It is vital to remember that construction dirt and fine, white dust from drywall sanding are notorious when renovating is taking place. A seasoned contractor will ensure that the problem is kept under control. Make sure that the contractor's idea of dust control and yours are the same. At the very least, a taped up barrier at doorways that will reduce dust flow from the construction zone. Such measures as taping off heat registers and even changing furnace filters every day while sanding is carried on. Such items as how workers will protect floors in traffic areas, how and where debris will be disposed of and what the final cleanup will be like all need to be addressed.

The thought that belongings need to be safeguarded is something that needs attention from each family member. Valuables/breakables should be removed from shelves since vibrations due to construction activity could well result in damage. Youngsters and animals need to be kept away from the construction area for everyones' sake.

A flexible schedule needs to be on the table as well, so a general time frame can be laid out. This helps with family planning and also lets you know what to expect when. Also important is an understanding of how the work will affect everyday life for the family, especially if a crucial area like the kitchen is being remodelled, afterall, eating out

Please turn to page 3



New is the route

If cost is prohibitive, then renovations may be best forgotten and a new home constructed. Here, the rafters are being lowered into place in Bridlewood, the newest Swank subdivision, west of town.

Chieftain photo by S.L.Johnston

Assessing home security

Assessing your home's security is the first step towards effective burglary protection. Take a walk around your home and property and try to identify the vulnerable areas of your home.

• Make sure that you have secure doors and better than just "good locks". The door, frame and lock form a mini-security system that is only as good as its weakest member.

• Sliding patio doors offer easy access points for burglars. Most patio door locks are flimsy and can be easily pried open; installing a special locking device will be a deterrent to theft.

• Always keep your garage door locked.

• Inform your neighbours if you are away and exchange each other's phone numbers.

• If you are away, use a timer to control your lights. When your house looks occupied, you are less of a target for a burglar.

• Suspend all newspaper deliveries for the time you plan to be away and arrange to have your mail picked up by a neighbour. A dark, empty home with a pile of newspapers and mail on the front porch is an open invitation for a thief.



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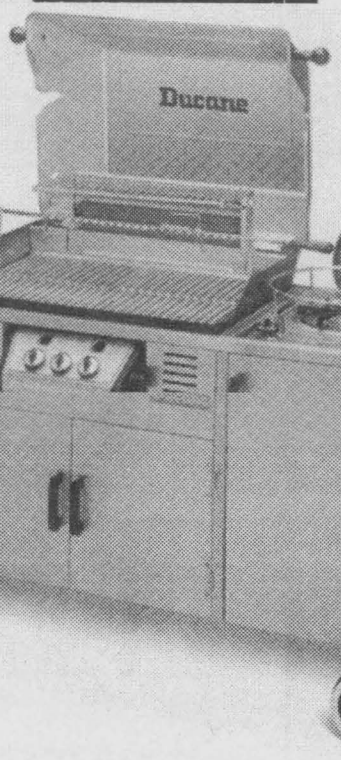

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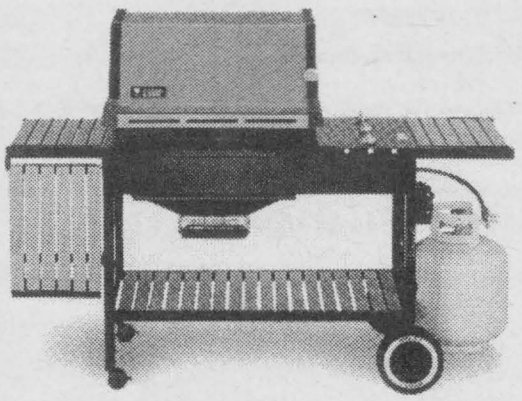



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Renovations

(Continued from Page 1)

every night for a month can get costly. The work can be timed to keep the kitchen functional as long as possible. Find out when you will be able to use the stove, microwave or refrigerator during construction. You may be well advised to set up a mini kitchen if things will be unavailable for a long period of time.

Your contractor should be aware of times when remodelling cannot take place, special dates or holiday times for example.

Even the day to day schedule that the workers will follow is important. You should also inform the contractor of how your family functions and therefore determine the best starting and stopping times for all concerned.

Renovations and remodelling can be a pain or a pleasure for you. Start the relationship with your contractor off on the right foot, by making the ground rules clear between the two of you.

Find out how to reach the person who is charge of your job, and arrange for correspondence with this person when calls are inconvenient to you both. Things like behaviour of the workers needs to be an issue that is clarified, for many of us do not want smoking in our homes under any conditions. The same applies for playing loud music and then there is the deal of how the workers will access your home. They need to have a door designated to them, and arrange for a key to be available to them. Will the workers cleanup each day" Will tools be left on the site? How will the job site be left each day? Be up front and ensure the contractor knows how you want things done. You both deserve to be aware of certain things before the actual work begins. Set the work rules early and there should be less chaos to deal with as things move along.



Making your own frames

Do you have a window that does not have a screen but you wish it did. Do you have a window that has a screen that is broken -- both the screening and the frame! These problems are easily fixed.

Bay Mills makes a convenient screen fram kit -- which is both easy to use and inexpensive.

This lightweight frame kit can be found in most hardware and lumber stores. It's very easy to use -- it simply snaps together with four high impact plastic corners. All you have to do is cut the frame to the right length to fit your window. The corners eliminate the need, for tricky mitre cuts. The frame is made from lightweight durable aluminum and is available in white, brown and mill finishes. Great for the cottage or home.

This information is brought to you by Bay Mills -- Canada's only insect screen manufacturer.

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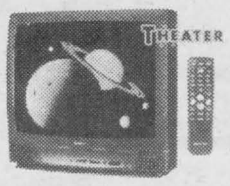

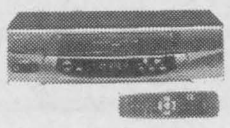

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Tips for getting your BBQ ready

Check the gas hose or supply line for nicks, cuts, cracking or abrasions. Replace only with factory authorized parts if found to be unserviceable.

Check all gas connections with a soap and water solution. Any bubbles that form or grow indicate a leak. If bubbles occur, shut off gas, tighten the fitting and retest. After checking, rinse the soap solution off with clear water. If a leak should persist, do not use barbecue. shut off gas and call for a service man.

Check under and around the controls, valves and burners for dirt, leaves, cob webs or anything that would affect the flow of combustion or ventilation of air. These areas must be clear.

Check the burners for obstructions, such as spider webs. Clean out, if necessary.

After moving barbecue in position, if portable, check screws, bolts and nuts for tightness. If stationary, also check screws, bolts and nuts for tightness.

We recommend thoroughly cleaning the grill once a year. Clean the cooking grill before each use by using a brass grill brush or piece of crumpled aluminum foil.

Don't locate the barbecue near combustible materials, gasoline and other flammable vapours and liquids.

Check your Owner's Manual for any required maintenance and re-read all "Warnings and Operating Instructions".



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Chieftain photo by S.L.Johnston

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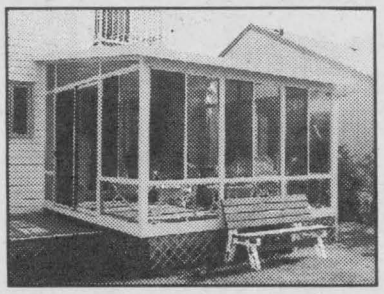

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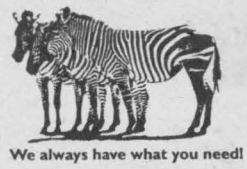

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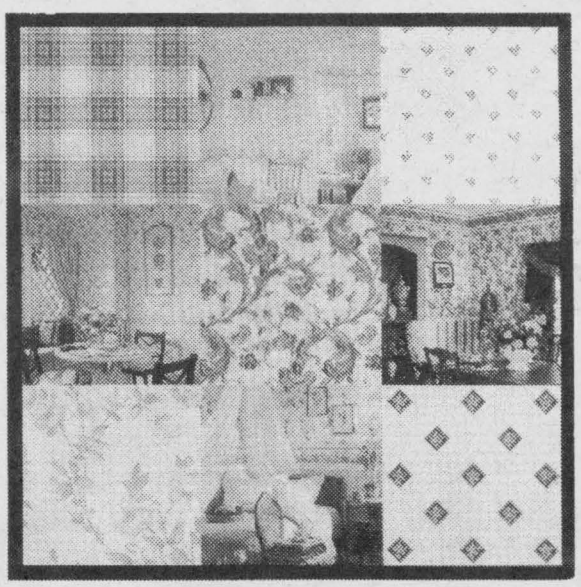

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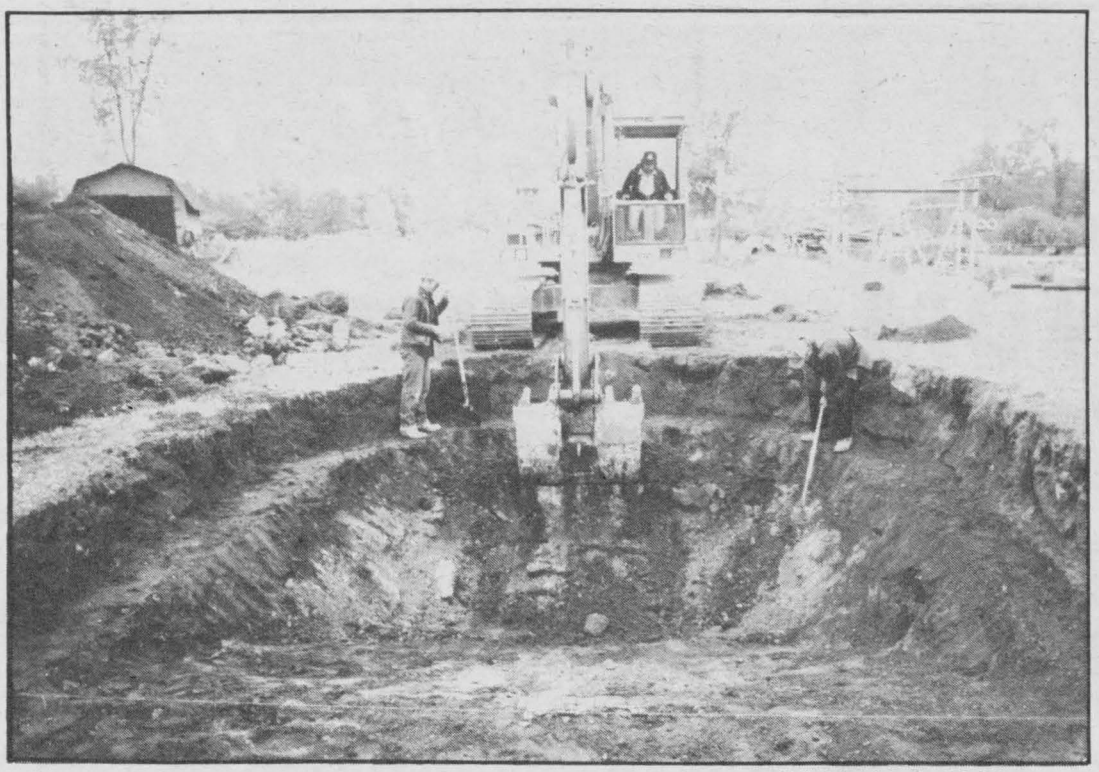

Chieftain photo by S.L.Johnston

Yard Improvement

Creating a recreational area in your yard can provide extra space for the family. A swimming pool can be a great area of activity for everyone, no matter their age. Keeping fit in a fun way is great for everyone.

Construction tips for a great looking job

As with any task, knowing a few practical tricks of the trade will help make your job easier and more enjoyable. The Canadian Institute of Treated Wood offers the following pointers for a better looking, longer lasting project.

When cutting or drilling holes in pressure treated wood it is important to re-seal the ends with a good preservative. This will help maintain the integrity of the pressure treating process and ensure its longevity. End-cut preservative is available at your lumber yard.

Handle end-cut preservative carefully. Read the instructions and follow accordingly. Store in a safe place. Dispose of empty containers according to instructions.

To help avoid splitting the wood, blunt the end of the nail slightly by hitting it with a hammer before nailing. Blunt nails cut their way through the wood but pointed nails split the wood fibres apart.

Don't nail any closer to the edge of the wood than the thickness of the board. When nailing close to the sides or ends, it is advisable to predrill the hole in a slightly smaller diameter than the nail. This will prevent splitting but still keep the nail secure.

To increase the holding power of nails, use spiralled shanked, or annular ringed shanked nails and drive them in at angles to each other. This is an especially important tip with pressure treated lumber because it lasts so much longer than untreated wood.

When building a deck, always put the bark side of the lumber facing up. That will prevent "cupping". To tell which is the bark side, check the growth rings on the ends of the wood -- the rings should be directed towards the ground.

CITW maintains a consumer information number and will provide free information about working with pressure treated wood. Call 1-800-463-TREE.



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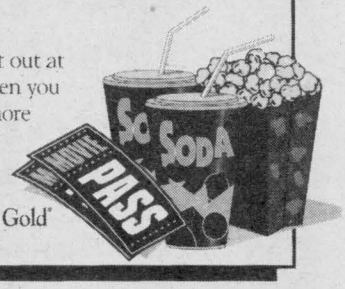

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Review all the options before taking the plunge

For most of us, buying a house is the single most important investment we'll make in our lives. That's why it's essential to review all the options.

If you are actively house hunting, you may have already heard about R-2000 homes. Although many houses that are advertised as "energy-efficient" have been built over the past decade, assessing exactly how well built or energy-efficient a house really is can be difficult. With an R-2000 home, there's no guessing. To merit the R-2000 designation and identification certificate, a house must meet strict technical requirements that ensure quality, comfort and energy efficiency. R-2000 homes have established an excellent reputation over the past 15 years. In fact, they're the best-built energy-efficient houses anywhere in the world. And the technology is all-Canadian.

R-2000 homes feature careful sealing against air leakage, fresh-air ventilation systems, high levels of insulation and superior heating systems. R-2000 homes are designed to take advantage of solar heat and light, and are equipped with energy-efficient appliances. As a result, R-2000 homes can save up to 50 percent in energy costs and reduce the impact of energy use on the environment.

Thanks to the ventilation system and the use of low-toxicity finishing materials in R-2000 homes, levels of indoor air pollution are lower than in conventional homes. Sealing and insulation help to reduce drafts and noise, and keep dust and pollen outside. In short, the R-2000 home provides you and your family with a healthier, more comfortable living environment.

If you're looking for the best family home that money can buy, consider the R-2000 option. R-2000 homes come in all shapes and sizes and are surprisingly affordable. For a list of regional R-2000 offices across the country, call Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency toll-free at 1-800-387-2000. You can also visit the Canadian Home Builders' Association's R-2000 web site at http://www.chba.ca/r2000/.



Renovating magic

Changing the windows can make a big difference in the appearance ce of a home as well as creating a warmer environment for the residents. The outside of a home may well need replacement sooner than any of the interior items.

S.L.Johnston *Chieftain Photo by S.L.Johnston*

Spring back into your garden

You've been itching to get back to work in the garden all winter long but don't know where to begin? Here are some pointers from HGTV Canada's *Gardener's Journal*, hosted by Kathy Renwald.

Now is a good time to look at your perennials to see if they've been heaved out of the ground by frost or freezing and thawing. If you see exposed roots, gently push the perennials back into the ground.

Make sure you don't trample on the soil during these early spring plant inspections. Walking on the soil at this time of year negatively impacts its structure. Stay on pathways.

As your spring bulbs start to bloom, take pictures. In the fall, you can refer to the photos and plant more to fill in the gaps.

Take a close look at your shrub roses and decide if they need pruning. Remove injured or dead wood and, if branches cross, remove one of them. Remember to prune to outward-facing buds to open up the interior of the shrub to more light and air.

Sprinkle a teaspoon or two of Epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) around the base of rose bushes to promote good flowering. Don't overdo it, though. Too much magnesium can be toxic to plants.

Each week, *Gardener's Journal* offers handy tips and invaluable advice to gardeners tuning into HGTV Canada. For information on how you can receive HGTV Canada, contact your cable company.

IT'S KING TOOL TIME

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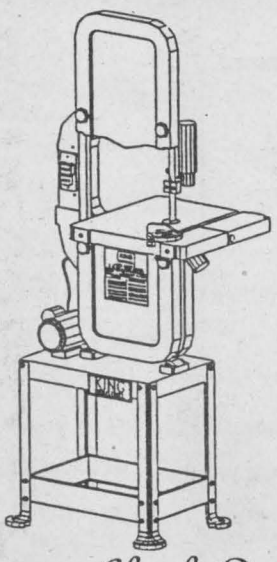

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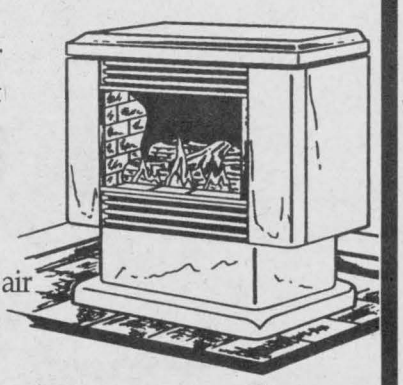

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Roof replacement

When remodelling or renovating, the best place to start is the roof. If things are bad up there, the wood base may need to be replaced before the shingles can be put on. Storm and ice protector are under the shingles. Valleys and chimney need special attention as well.

Chieftain Photo by S.L.Johnston

Green Fact

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Does your home need a new roof?

For homeowners who need to replace their old, leaky roofs, there are a myriad of options available. Only one alternative, however, provides the optimum combination of strength and durability with a good environmental record. That's steel.

Thanks to the latest steel making technologies, steel roofing offers an array of advantages for today's homeowners. And as a result, the popularity of steel roofing has grown dramatically. Roofing contractors in Canada are using attractive, durable steel for all types of single-dwellings, retirement homes and affordable housing projects.

A roof made with steel is resistant to decay, discolouration and mildew. Steel roofing also sheds snow easily. Other roofing materials can rot and crack during the winter freeze-thaw cycle -- but not steel.

Steel is considered a "green" building material because it is 100 per cent recyclable and produced in an environmentally friendly process. When used for roofing, steel saves valuable landfill space because it can be placed on top of an existing asphalt roof that would otherwise be garbage. (This also saves the homeowner money on labour to replace the old roof.)

Steel roofing provides numerous benefits to home-owners.

~ Attractive appearance: Painted steel roofs are available in a rainbow of colours to enhance the style and beauty of any home.

~ Long-lasting durability: This increases the value of a home and leads to future savings.

~ Superior wind resistance and fire protection: Steel is non-combustible and provides protection from wind-blown sparks as a result of lightning or fireplace flues.

~ Lower energy bills: Light colours reflect heat in warm climates to provide a savings in cooling costs. Houses with steel roofs can meet or exceed all energy requirements.

The strength of steel is legendary, but many people do not realize that the "new steel" is stronger than ever. Now anything made with steel can be made with less material and produced more cost effectively.

Consider this: the new parameters of steel's strength are such that the Sears Tower in Chicago (one of the world's tallest buildings) could be erected today with 35 percent less steel than was needed when it went up in 1974.

For more information about the "new steel" in residential roofing and construction, visit www.thenewsteel.org or ask your building supply store.

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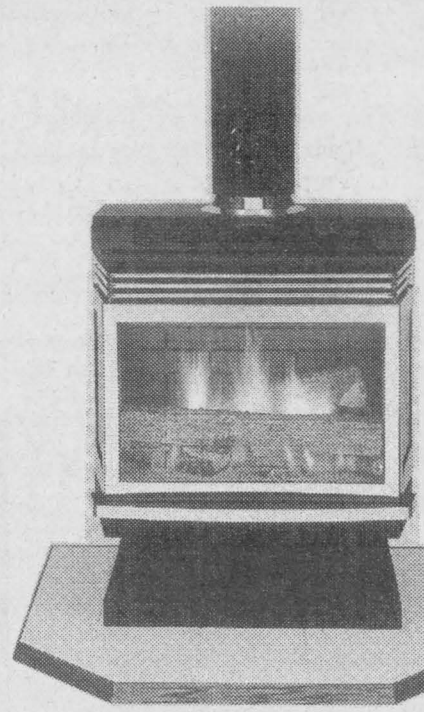

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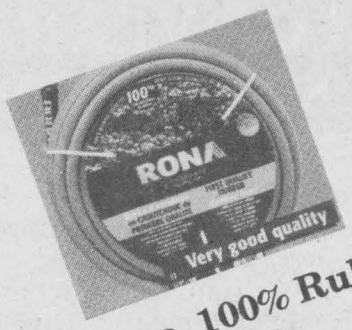

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Checking carefully

The contractor does a quick check of the ceiling area before putting the last piece of gyprock on. The insulation is in place and the strapping is solid. Replacing tiles or dropping a ceiling can give a new look to an older room. *Chieftain photo by S.L.Johnston*

When the chips are down

Ever taken a sawdust shower? It can happen whenever you are drilling into anything that is directly overhead. All of a sudden you're spitting out sawdust. How do you prevent it from falling on your face?

The solution is as close as your kitchen cupboard, according to the experts at HGTV Canada's *In The Workshop*. They say to take a margarine tub and cut a hole in the bottom large enough to fit over the drill chuck. Then place the tub over the nose of your drill to catch all the dust and chips. One thing to watch out for: make sure the hole is big enough to let the drill spin freely, or else the tub will spin with it and toss the contents all over the place.

And here's an extra drilling tip: When making pilot holes with a drill, you don't need to use a regular bit. The best thing to do is cut the head off one of the nails you'll be using and insert it into your drill to make perfectly sized pilot holes. Many people don't realize that a twisted finishing nail is actually stronger than a small bit.

Look for these and other handy tips from *In The Workshop* on HGTV Canada.

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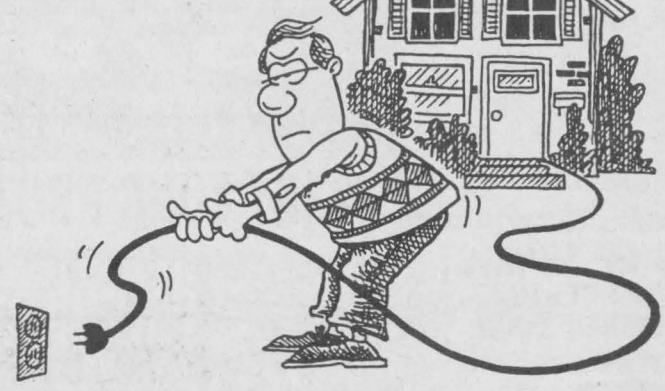

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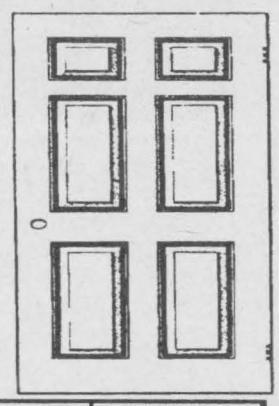

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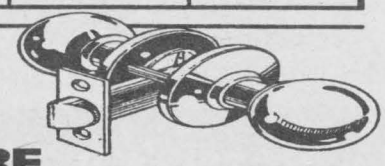

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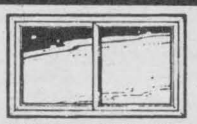

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