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Home Improvement

YOUR GUIDE FOR THOSE SPRING HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Buying or selling your home?

by Michael Bailey
Chieftain Staff Reporter

Every year we at The Chieftain, put together a Home Improvement tab to help our readers as they prepare for the big spring cleaning.

Helpful tips on everything from gardening to insulation appear, and through the generosity of those who advertise in this addition to our paper, we are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to help you with useful points and tips on home improvement.

However, while looking through last year's Home Improvement edition, I noticed that there wasn't much information on buying a new home, or selling the one you already own.

Jumping in the Tracker, I took a quick tour over to Iroquois' newest Real Estate Broker and delved into the fast pace world of real estate.

Jacques Asselin has taken up shop in what used to be known as Bob's Hand Car Wash.

He became a real estate broker in 1987 after making a decision he wanted to work closer to home.

"I made up my mind when I started this that one day I would want my own office and work for myself," explained Jacques.

It took a few years for Jacques to realize his dream, but that was because he wanted to gain experience in the market, and have a sound working knowledge upon which he could build a solid foundation for his own office.

In the last three years the prices of homes and real estate have dropped approximately 15 percent. With the economy turning around one would think that the prices would also begin to rise, but Mr. Asselin pointed out that this has not happened yet.

"People who are interested in selling their homes should put it on the market for market value," said the real estate broker. "We've seen people push up their prices and usually those are the homes that sit on the market and don't sell well."

When selling your home the small things can play a large part in making the difference between selling and not selling.

A clean home is important.

"If you have people coming to look at you house and they are bumping into furniture and there are clothes all over the place, it definitely makes it harder to sell the home," said Mr. Asselin.

As well, the ethstetics of the outside of the house are important.

A clean yard, with well trimmed hedges and a newly mowed lawn go a long way in helping the prospective buyers in making their decision to purchase.

"First impressions in this industry are extremely important," pointed out Jacques. "I also tell people who are interested in selling, that they should consider cleaning out their garage. This is where your second largest investment is going to be parked, the first being the home."

To increase the value of your home you might consider new windows and doors. Energy conservation has increasingly been playing a larger roll in the home.

New wiring and plumbing can be a huge selling point for prospective buyers, as can the type of energy used to heat the home.

"More and more people are not willing to look at a house that uses electric heat," said Mr. Asselin. "When you consider what it's worth, it isn't really a major expense to put in a natural gas furnace."

As well, gas hot water heaters are also popular and are very efficient.

Because energy conservation

•Please turn to page 2



Northside

Located beside Swank Contruction's new office, Jacques Asselin has opened his own real estate office here in Iroquois. Jacques is looking forward to helping you with your every need. If you have any questions about buying or selling your home, call Jacques at 652-1784.

Chieftain photo by M.C. Bailey.

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Small incentives make a big difference

For many potential buyers in today's market, even the smallest incentive can make a big difference between whether or not they actually make a home purchase.

As a result, many REALTORS have been promoting government incentive programs such as the Ontario Home Ownership Savings Plan (OHOSP).

This government program is geared towards Ontarians who are saving for their first home. By opening an OHOSP, they will receive an OHOSP Tax Credit, a Land Transfer Tax refund and interest on their OHOSP funds.

However, only individuals with annual net income under forty-thousand dollars or married couples with combined net income of less than eighty-thousand dollars are eligible for the plan.

The tax credit plan participants will receive is based ontheir annual income. For example, individuals earning twenty-five-thousand dollars will receive a three hundred and seventy-five dollar tax credit on a two-thousand dollar contribution to their OHOSP. In comparison, individuals earning thirty-five thousand dollars will receive a one hundred and twenty-five dollar tax credit.

Land Transfer Tax Refund

Plan participants eligible for tax credits will also receive a Land Transfer Tax refund. This refund is based on the purchase price of a home

Here's how it works: plan holders would receive a full refund of up to one thousand, two hundred and twenty-five dollars if their home costs one hundred and fifty thousand dollars or less. For homes which cost between one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to two hundred thousand dollars, the refund is graduated. Any homes which cost more than two hundred thousand dollars would not receive a refund.

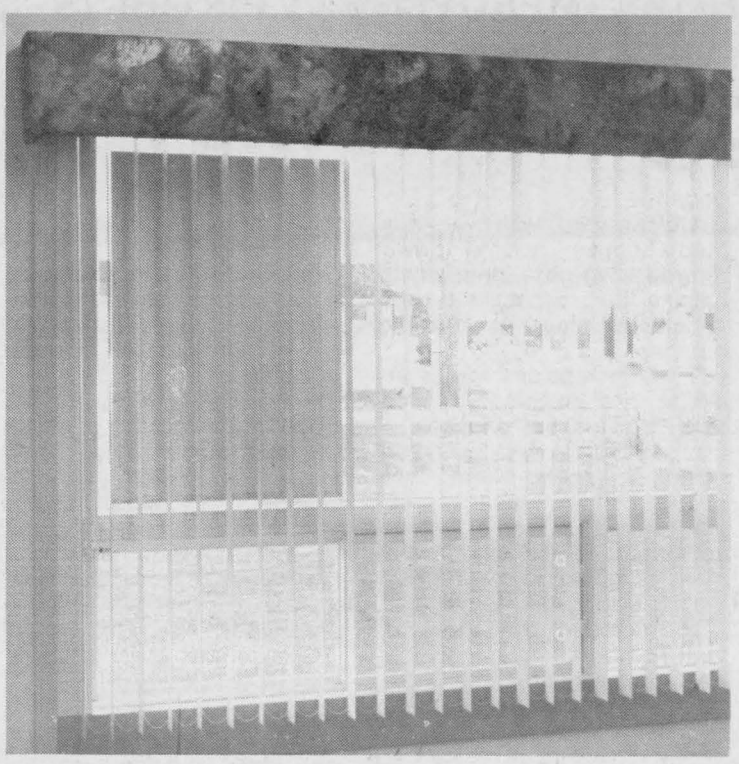
Individuals interested in opening an OHOSP must meet the following eligibility requirements: Be 18 years of age or older; Be residents of Ontario; Have a valid Social Insurance Number; Have never owned an eligible home; Have not previously opened an OHOSP; and Their spouse has not owned a home since their marraige. Interested applicants who previously had a federal Registered Home Ownership Savings Plan (RHOSP) may still participate in the OHOSP program if they meet the above requirements.

Easy to participate

An interested applicant can open an OHOSP by filling out an application form from any participating financial institution and depositing funds into the plan. Couples must complete separate OHOSP application forms since joint OHOSPs are not available.

Participants in the program can only open one OHOSP. However, they can transfer their plan from one financial institution to another.

For more information, call the Ministry of Finance at 1-800-263-7965.



Window treatment

Lee and Co. Design Consultants of Iroquois are up on all the latest trends for dressing windows. Not to say that is all they are known for! Call Margaret at 652-2329 for any of your decorating needs. She recently completed a window treatment project in Jacques E. Asselin's Real Estate office.

Chieftain photo by R. van Noppen

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Buying

has become so important, a well insulated home and basement are also strong selling points for the buyer.

Recreation rooms can increase the value of a home, but as Mr. Asselin pointed out, "you only get out of it what you put into it."

For people looking to build a rec room it is advisable to see an architect or contractor to help you in the planning process.

"Even if you are going to do the work yourself, it can really save you a lot of money in the long run if you seek the advise of a professional when trying to enhance your property and add value," said Jacques.

Decorating is also important and an interior decorator can give invaluable advice when you are looking for a change.

For the first time home owner there are also a number of different programs to help you out.

The Ontario Home Ownership Savings Program and the Land Transfer Tax Refund are available and interested applicants should talk to their real estate broker or their bank to find out more about these.

Seeking pre-approval on a home loan is also a benefit to buyers and as Mr. Asselin mentioned can be used as a bargaining tool.

"Depending on your credit history, a bank can give you approved credit and it's like having cash in hand."

So, if you are thinking about buying or selling your home, take a few minutes, visit your bank and your real estate broker for more valuable tips and information.

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Home improvement in the garden

Many Canadian homeowners spend their vacations in their own backyards. With the tight economy, it's understandable. But there's more to the stay-at-home vacation than finance. If your home is your castle, then your garden is your playground.

The business of home renovations is booming as the nineties unfold. Annually, Canadians spend more than $16 billion improving their homes and as the days grow longer attention turns to outdoor improvements. From romantic gazebos and covered wooden swings to fences, benches and decks, the possibilities are almost endless.

Best of all, creating attractive and functional outdoor additions is more than just fun and aesthetically pleasing. The fact is, smart garden projects add value to your property. Indeed, there are dozens of easy backyard ideas that will not only improve the look of your home, but also its monetary worth.

However, Henry Walthert, Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Treated Wood (CITW) cautions it is important to have a plan that will work before you go rushing out to the garden armed with a hammer and saw.

"You can't just start throwing things together," Walthert says. "That's why we make a variety of design plans available to the public. It's part of our commitment to providing consumers with useful information."

Each year, the CITW offers Canadian do-it-yourselfers a full range of design plans for backyard projects. They are available for free, along with a handy information kit. Among the most requested plans are ideas for patio and pool decks, entertainment areas, picnic tables, storage sheds and a variety of fences and gates.

Pressure treated wood is especially useful for outdoor projects because it is more durable than untreated wood and requires less maintenance.

"And the fact that it lasts much longer than untreated wood also makes it better for the environment," Walthert adds. "Using pressure treated wood means we cut down fewer Canadian trees."

"For example, let's take an average backyard deck, that might call for two or three trees to begin with, but if you work with untreated wood you'll probably need to replace all or part of it every few years. On the other hand, using pressure treated wood, that same deck could last up to 50 years."

Quality pressure treated wood is as ideal for landscaping as it is for decks. It makes an attractive and lasting border for patios, driveways or flower gardens. In fact, a recent study conducted by independent researchers through laboratories at Texas A&M and Southwest Research Institute confirmed that treated wood is safe for all types of gardens when it is used properly.

"When the lumber is in close contact with the ground, it's very important to make sure the wood is properly treated," Walthert says. "The fact is, not all treated wood is the same and you have to consider the application before you buy it."

When using pressure treated wood for ground contact applications, Walthert advises it is best to choose incised wood.

"The incising process allows the preservatives to penetrate the wood more completely and deeper," he says. "That affords you much better and lasting protection."

Consumers can tell which wood has been incised by small staple-like incisions on the wood's surface.

(NOTE: Project design plans for your garden are available free of charge from the CITW. You will also receive a handy information kit. Call 1-800-463-TREE.)

Removing adhesive plastic tiles

Use a hot hair dryer to soften the adhesive, pry the tiles out and scrape the heated adhesive off with a putty knife.

To remove old wall paper the easiest approach is to use Paper Tigers. These are little gizmos with what looks like a big doorknob on top of a triple head base equipped with sharp cutters.

They are run all over the wall in circular motion, cutting and lifting the edge of the cut paper. A wallpaper store should handle them.

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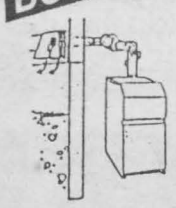

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Stronger credit growth in 1994

Residential mortgage credit is expected to grow by 8 to 9 per cent in 1994 compared to 5.4 per cent in 1993 reports the first-quarter Mortgage Market Trends, released recently by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The extent of mortgage credit growth is tied to housing market activity. "This year's expansion is based on expected stronger new construction and resale market activity, combined with rising prices in both markets," said Marc Pellerin, CMHC's Capital Market Economist. "But, job uncertainty will prevent the housing market from booming in spite of very low interest rates," Pellerin added.

Mortgage Trends:

Where do Canada's major lenders see mortgage markets heading in 1994? The consensus view of la Confedederation de caisses populaires et d'economie Desjardins du Quebec, Canada Trust, Scotia Bank and the Bank of Montreal Mortgage Corporation is that mortgage lending activity should improve in 1994, albeit at a slow pace.

Mortgage Debt:

Although Canadians have seen their mortgage debt load rise steadily throughout the 1990's, tumbling interest rates have made the burden easier to bear. Residential mortgage debt stood at 67.5 per cent of total disposable income at the end of 1993 in comparison with 46.1 per cent ten years ago. Analysis shows that this is not really worrisome given that mortgage debt in relation to what houses are worth, has not changed that much since 1979. In addition, servicing costs below 4 per cent of personal disposable income, are lower than the 5.4 per cent level observed in 1984.

Mortgage Investments:

The National Housing Act non-prepayable Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBSs) have outperformed Government of Canada Bonds (GOCs) as an investment over the past four years. The total rate of return on non-prepayable MBSs averaged 13.50 per cent during the 1990-1993 period in comparison with 12.10 per cent for GOCs.

The NHA MBS Program set new records in 1993 with the issuance of 428 new pools for a total value of $6,579.8 million. This compares with the 1992 figures of 388 new issues totalling $5,959.4 million. The continued success of the NHA MBS Program brought the total outstanding amount to $16,308.2 million (1,415 units) at the end of 1993.

Locking out burglars

Install deadbolt locks on doors leading from the house to the basement, garage and storage areas. With these doors locked, burglars who get into one area often can't go any farther.



Building a better home

With spring in the air construction workers will soon be back in full swing. Work in the new sub division north of Morrisburg has been going on year round. Pictured above, Dean Cassell emerges from the newest duplex. Both units have already been sold. *Chieftain photo by M.C. Bailey.*

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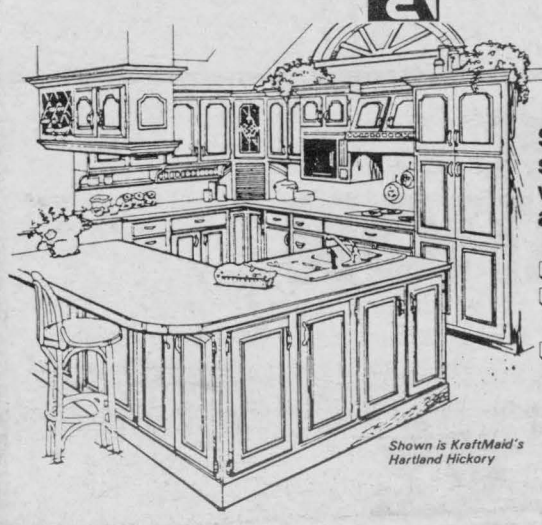

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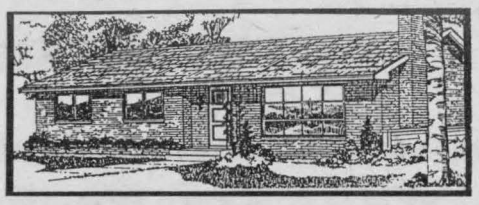

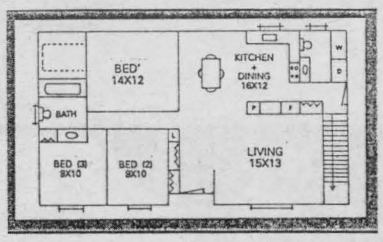

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Woodworking hobby develops out of love

by Rebecca van Noppen
Chieftain Staff Reporter

Dale Williams' woodworking abilities are proof you don't have to take a course to be able to do it.

The home renovations and many articles of wooden furniture he has designed and constructed over the past five years, reveal his interest, talent and dedication to this hobby.

The Winchester resident has done more projects than he can count, including designing and making kitchen cabinets, tables and chairs, wooden figurines and tape cassette holders.

Among the first projects he completed, was a shelf for the kitchen, a table, and a teddy bear stand for his son, Ryan.

Williams got into this hobby by reading about home renovations and woodworking. He said if you have an interest in woodworking, can read, follow instructions, and have a good tablesaw, anyone can do woodworking.

"You can do a lot with a $500 table saw, if you know how to use it," he said. "You can do complete cabinet making and moldings."

However he did say you have to know something about drafting if you are going to design your own work.

Williams has built up his woodworking equipment over the past few years to $3000 worth of power tools. His first piece of equipment was a table-saw which he used in the basement of his first home. When he and his wife Kim moved to their present home three years ago, he set up his workshop in their small garage.

Williams' advice to anyone looking into woodworking or setting up a shop is to make sure a person researches it well. Whether it be a small project or not, you have to make sure it's done right.

"The biggest thing is having to research every angle before doing the project," he said. "And don't be in a hurry."

"Research it and draw it out before you build what you're making."

He also suggests shopping around for the best prices of wood and equipment.

"If you buy cheap equipment, everything you build will look cheap," he said.

If you're not quite sure of how to go about doing a project, Williams says, there are always people around who do woodworking and home renovations. If you know what you want to do, employees of stores or lumber yards can help you determine what you need.

When Williams and his wife bought their home, it was in rough shape. Over the past years he has worked on every room including the kitchen.

His most recent home renovation project has been in the basement. Up until fall, it was wasted space, because his family wasn't using it. Now, he has turned it into a living area, with a toy room and washroom off to the sides.

To save space he built his TV and VCR into the bar.

To save money, he bought second-hand furniture, rugging and other accessories. These ingenius ideas and his own labor saved them a lot of money. He estimates that to get a contractor to do the job it would cost about $10,000.

"In total, I wouldn't have $2000 total in materials and everything, down there right now."

When they started renovating their home, they pursued the projects in light of reselling the house in the future. The changes they made were based on that principle.

The Williams' agree, that now their focus has changed.

"Originally, the work was based on resale, but now, we base it on the fact it's our home," she said. "People make changes anyway when they buy a house."

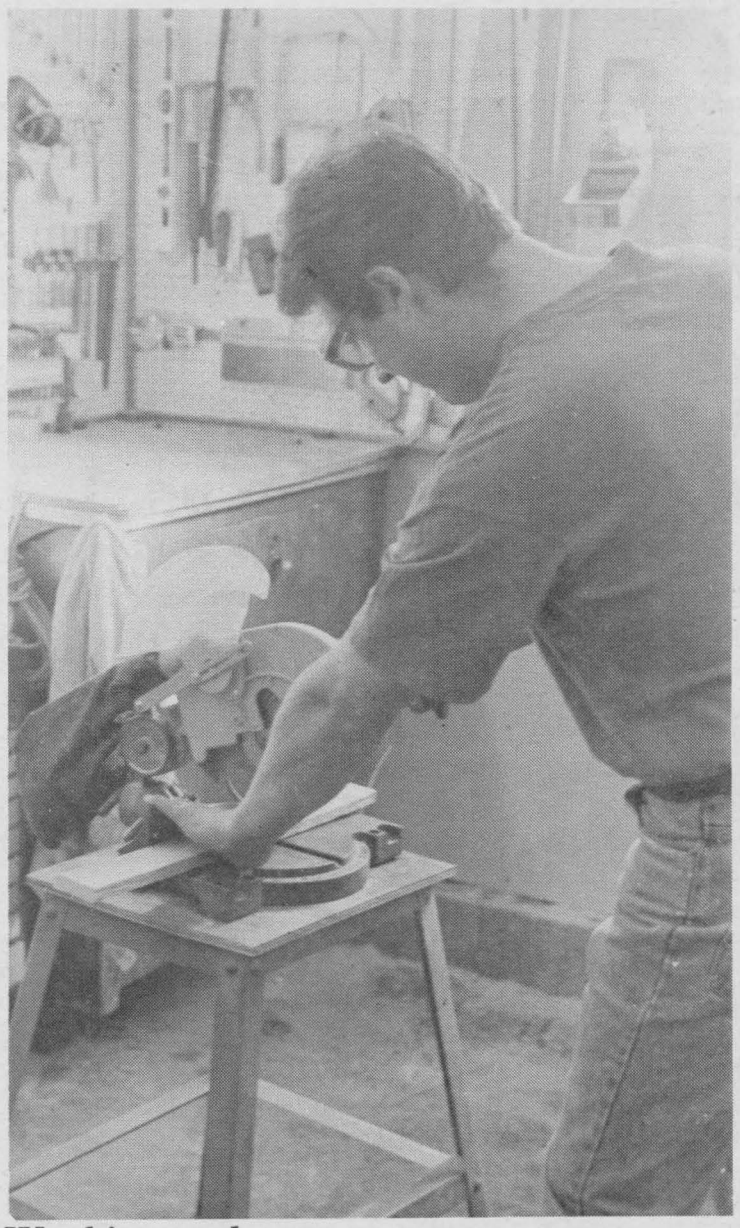
However, Williams said you do have to keep resale in mind.

"You need the inside track of real estate, where to put money into the house to get money back out, if you ever decide to sell it," he said.

For instance, they installed patio doors off their dining area, to access the back yard. Later they built a deck off the patio doors.

He recommends that you always renovate the way you want to.

"Don't make changes in your house to meet someone else's liking. Do it to your own," he said.



Working at home

Winchester resident Dale Williams has been doing his own home renovations and woodworking projects for the past five years. He has set up his shop in his garage. To save money, many people are doing their own renovations, instead of hiring a contractor.

Chieftain photo by R. van Noppen

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Experts stress benefits

Today, every tree counts. Our forests must be protected and the wood we harvest wisely used. It's a question of protecting the environment and conserving one of nature's most valuable and versatile resources. The fact is, there are precious few substitutes for wood.

"One of the best ways to help conserve Canadian forests is simply to extend the service life of the wood we use," says Henry Walthert, Executive Director of theCanadian Institute of Treated Wood /CITW. "If we just make sure the wood we use stays strong and lasts a long time, we'll end up cutting down a lot less trees."

That's where pressure treated wood comes in. According to Walthert, carefullyselected timber, pressure treated with a preservative after it is cut and before it is used, "will last up to four times longer than untreated wood." Each year,that saves hundreds of thousands of trees, not to mention millions of dollars in maintenance and replacement.

"Let's take an average backyard deck," Walthert continues. "That might call for two or three trees to begin with, but you'll probably need to replace all or part of your deck every few years if you're working with untreated wood. On the other hand, if you're using pressure treated wood to build the deck, it could last up to 50 years."

The CITW launched a strong environmental program several years ago. The goals of the program, called Treated Wood Saves Trees, are to establish firm environmental guidelines for CITW members and to provide information to consumers about the benefits of treated wood products. The CITW also works with government agencies to promote health and safety standards. A wide variety of information about pressure treated wood is available to the public free of charge from the CITW in Ottawa. This includes a useful brochure that addresses issues of health, safety and the environment.

Fighting natural enemies

Although some species of the trees are more naturally durable than others.

But the pressure treatment process protects wood from its predators. Best of all, treated wood will look and feel good for decades, because the process doesn't alter wood's essential characteristics. Treated wood won't shrink, swell, split or warp any more than untreated wood. It will simply be more durable and last much longer.

During the pressure treating process, stable chemical preservatives are forced deep into wood cells where they react with wood sugars to form insoluble precipitates. The precipitates, which are highly resistant to leaching, remain fixed in the wood to ensure its structural integrity.

The most widely used preservative in the Canadian pressure treating industry is chromated copper arsenate/CCA. Treated wood preserved with CCA has been safely used for decades and remains the building material of choice for everything from porches and fences to gazebos, benches and marina docks. Three other preservatives in commercial use are ammonical copper arsenate, pentachlorophenol and creosote. Each one has specific uses and benefits.

the environmental benefits and the safe use of pressure treated wood, call the Canadian Institute of Treated Wood. The toll-free telephone number is 1-800-463-TREE.



Two in one

Semi-detached units are becoming extremely popular, and are a form of affordable housing. Although at first glance one might think this is Carman Court, it is really the Prosser Subdivision in Cardinal.

Chieftain photo by S.L. Cumberland

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Treated wood safe for playground

A forestry expert has concluded that concerns about the dangers posed by toxic chemicals in the production of pressure treated wood for use in playground equipment, patio decks and other residential applications are unfounded. Dr.Paul Cooper, Assistant Professor of Forestry at the University of Toronto based his findings on a review of toxicity tests conducted around the world.

In recent years, some parents have worried playground equipment made from pressure treated wood might be harmful to their children's health. The reason most often cited was the possibility of ingesting or absorbing the toxic components of wood preservatives that "leak" or are otherwise dislodged from treated wood. In fact, there is a large body of evidence to indicate no such danger exists.

Pressure treated wood is a sensible, economical choice. It lasts considerably longer and remains much stronger than untreated wood. Over the course of several summers, that could mean your child won't slip through a rotting plank in the playhouse. It's the difference between hours of enjoyment and time out for repairs.

Best of all, according to the experts, pressure treated wood is environmentally sound and safe for your children to play on. Numerous studies over the last decade clearly show that any health and safety risks associated with the backyard use of pressure treated wood are negligible.

"The scientific evidence we have indicates it is safe," says Cooper, who analyzed the results of numerous toxicity studies. Most of the risk assessments Cooper examined were based on so-called "dislodgeability" tests. These tests examined whether the toxic components of preservatives can be dislodged from treated wood in significant amounts when the product is wet or rubbed.

In other words, is it safe for children to crawl around playground equipment that is made from treated wood? And if your child touches the wood and then licks his or her hands, is there any danger?

'The best tests were done by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in 1990,' says Cooper. 'They were specifically related to playground equipment and the risk of skin cancer and they determined the risk was less than one in a million. Even in the worst case scenarios, it was nine in one million. That compares to 8,600 per million who contract skin cancer from the sun and other sources.'

Similar tests conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency came to the same conclusion, that treated wood is safe.

'I wish that more Canadians knew about these studies,' says Henry Walthert, Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Treated Wood (CITW). 'There's been so much misinformation about pressure treated wood and that has caused a lot of needless worry. Canadians should know that treated wood is safe to use

Please turn to page 10

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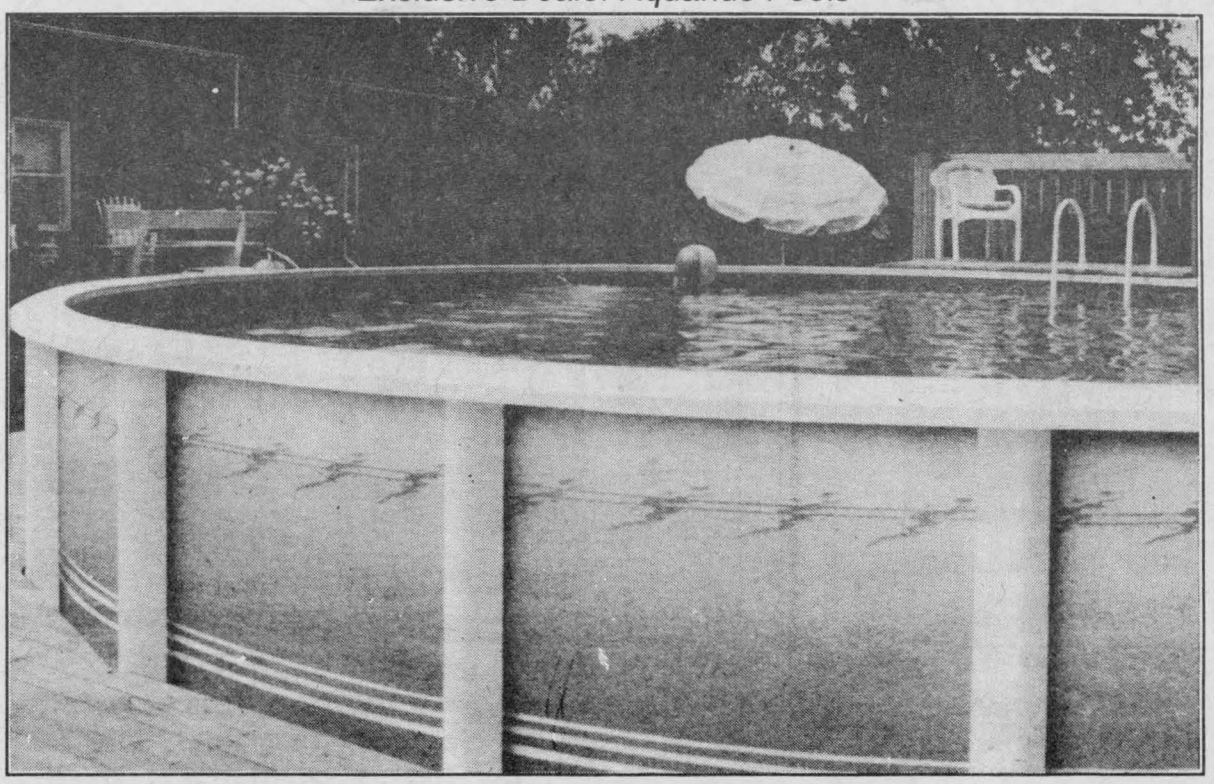

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Paint tips from consumer ministry

If you're planning to paint the exterior of your house, Ontario's consumer ministry has some tips to help the project roll to a smooth finish.

Whether you do the job yourself or hire professionals, the key to successful exterior painting is careful surface preparation.

If old paint is peeling from exterior walls, make sure it is scraped off thoroughly and that the surface is sanded to a rough edge. The scuffed surface will help the new paint grip more effectively and prevent peeling. Primer should always be applied and allowed to dry thoroughly before you start on the finishing coat.

Use a wire brush of steel wool to remove peeling paint from metal surfaces and apply a metal primer before the colour.

Painting over brick can do wonders for a dreary facade, but remember that once painted, brick will need regular upkeep. Only water-based (latex) paint should be used on brick because it allows the surface to breathe. If oil-based paint is used, the brick surface will be sealed and moisture build-up beneath the paint will cause it to peel.

Aluminum siding is thinly coated with paint, which is baked on during the manufacturing process. It should stand up to the elements for 10 to 15 years, although sunlight and harsh winters will take their toll.

Most manufacturers don't recommend painting aluminum siding unless it begins to oxidize - if this happens it'll leave a chalky film on your hands when you touch it. A flat or eggshell-coloured water-based acrylic paint, which won't highlight surface flaws, should be used.

For most new and repainted surfaces, including aluminum or vinyl siding, wood, masonry, hardboard, plywood and stucco, top-quality paints will offer the best in adhesion, colour retention and durability. Shop around and compare quality and prices before you buy.

Paints that carry the "EcoLogo" symbol of the federal Environmental Choice Program are low in the organic compounds that can cause eye, nose and throat irritations and may be toxic to plants as well as contributing to air pollution. Information on environmentally friendlier paints is available from the program, which can be contacted at the address given below.

The walls are prepared, the paint's in hand and all that's needed is to slap it on - carefully. A brush and roller or a pad applicator are the easiest tools for the do-it-yourselfer.

Spray painting requires very good technique. If applied properly it will give you a good finish, but paint sprayed from too far away will begin to dry before reaching the wall. If the spray's too thick, the paint will run.

To hire professionals who will do a job you'll be happy to live with, ask friends and family for recommendations. Ask for references and check local samples of the painter's work.

Ask for written estimates from three professionals you feel comfortable with before giving someone the green light. Estimates should spell out details including:

-information relating to surface preparation (will old paint be removed by hand, or will a mechanical blaster or stripper be used);

-brand-name and description of the paint to be used;

-number of coats of paint;

-method of application (brush, roller or paint-gun);

-breakdown of labour and material costs;

-terms of payment;

-anticipated work schedule;

-guarantee.

For information on reduced-pollution paints contact the Environmental Choice Program, 107 Sparks Street, Suite 200, Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3, or telephone (613) 952-9440.

To receive a free copy of a brochure listing publications on a variety of consumer issues, contact the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Communications Branch, 9th floor, 555 Yonge Street, Toronto, On M7A 2H6. The enquiry line for the Toronto area can be reached at (416) 326-8555 or call toll free 1-800-268-1142 from other parts of Ontario. Special electronic equipment for the deaf, hard of hearing and people with speech difficulties is available at (416) 326-8566.

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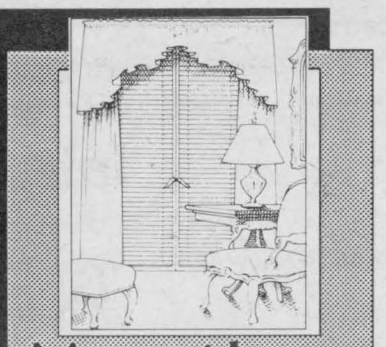

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Home heating hints

There was a time, not too many years ago, when the economy was very strong and the spring time was so hot, that an air conditioning installer only had to be smart enough to stock enough units to fill the huge demand, to be very successful. But,alas, along came a slew of 'part time' installers, working out of their trucks or basements. They grabbed a share of the market by cutting prices. That was in good times.

Then the economy turned down, and although most of the 'part timers` disappeared, a strong belief that, in tough times, the way to get ahead in business is to cut prices, the trend persisted. But, unlike some retailers, none of the `cutrate` adherents in the sevice trade are able to point with pride to any notable success. Unfortunately price-cutting policies and profits with which to expand just do not go together.

Find that leak before it's too late

Wet or rotted wood indicates a leakage problem, which, if left unattended, could result in expensive repairs.

To help determine the source of a leak, turn on all the taps in the kitchen and bathroom. Then check the basement ceiling and pipes.

Broken pipes will not always be the cause of leaks. Insufficient caulking around shower intallations, bathtubs and toilets can produce leaks causing early deterioration of the floor, not to mention unpleasant odors.

Panel Box may need upgrading

If you discover deteriorating wire insulation, exposed or bare wire, have the wiring inspected by an electrician.

An electrician will also be needed if the main fuse keeps blowing or the main circuit breaker keeps shutting off, indicating a need to upgrade the system.

Many older houses have an undersized electrical panel for today's technologies.

The system may require upgrading before proceeding with any renovation work that requires additional electrical requirements.

Foundation problems not obvious

Small cracks in the foundation are sometimes unavoidable because concrete usually shrinks after it has set.

Large cracks are a different matter. These can be so severe they go right through the wall. They indicate a major shift in the house or serious structural damage. It would be wise to call in a foundation specialist.

Sometimes the signs will be more subtle. Check for damp spots, crumbling concrete, as well as cracking.



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Chieftain photo by S.L. Cumberland

Making more room

There is nothing more regal than an old stone home. But the old ones require more than tender, loving care. An addition that looks just right and doesn't take away from the elegance of the original home is hard to find. There are a couple fine examples out on the Number Two Highway west of Iroquois.

Benefits of sunroom

The addition of a sunroom requires good planning. The benefits, however, can be surprising. By allowing the sun to stream into the house through its windows, the sunroom adds warmth, light and beauty.

Naturally, a certain control of the sun's warmth is a must if you want to enjoy the sunroom without having to draw the curtains. The choice of glass and perhaps the addition of blinds will minimize the effect of summer's hottest days.

Insulation and heating are musts to ensure that the sunroom can be used all year round. Good air circulation will prevent condensation becoming a problem. A patio door and windows that open are other items to consider.

The choice of windows is the cornerstone of any sunroom. Tempered glass is less breakable. Tinted glass softens the strongest rays of the sun. Thermopane glass conserves heat during winter and reduces it during summer. Reflecting glass directs heat towards its source, which avoids overheating during summer.

It is only sensible to build a sun room facing south, preferably orienting a little to the east. The manner in which the windows are placed in the framework will influence the thermal qualities of the sunroom.

Aluminum structures are light, rigid and stable. In addition, aluminum is a material capable of supporting heavy panels of glass over wide areas.

Wood structures blend harmoniously with the natural environment outside the sunroom. They can be built with exterior aluminum coverings that will keep maintenance to a minimum.

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CONTINUED

Treated wood

Continued from page 7

and safe for children's playground equipment. The test results are there to see.'

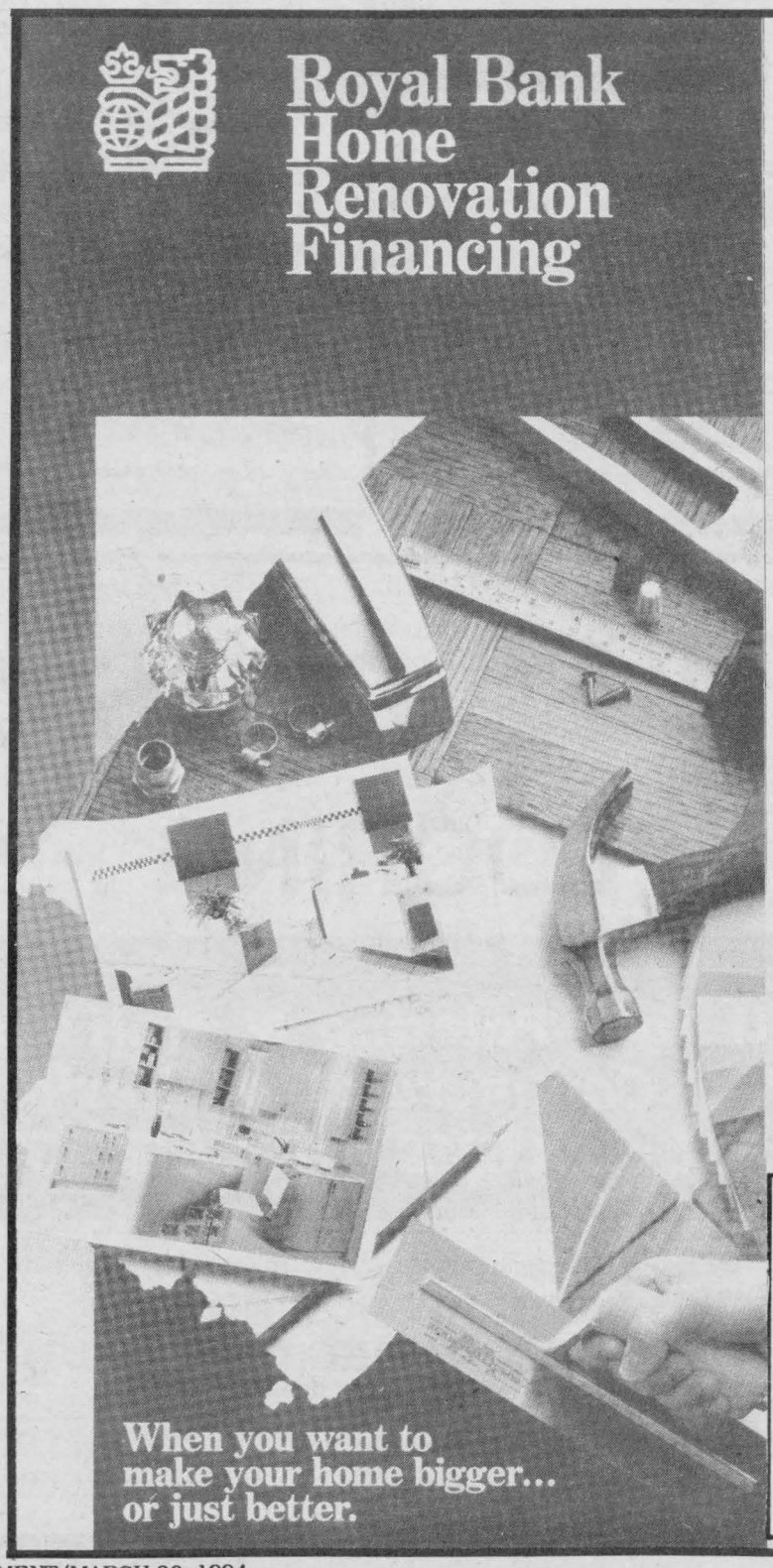
Still, the experts advise, it's important to be informed and to use common sense. 'You want to make sure the treated wood is completely fixed before it is worked with and make sure it is free of surface deposits, 'Cooper says. 'Beyond that, there is nothing to be concerned about.'

Wood preservatives used in Canada meet all the requirements and standards of the Pest Control Products Act administered by Agriculture Canada. Do-it-yourself carpenters have been using pressure treated wood for decades to build everything from outdoor decks and activity centres to storage sheds, fences and gazebos.

As part of its consumer information program, the CITW has produced a brochure that examines the health, safety and environmental aspects of pressure treated wood products.

The pamphlet, called Treated Wood Saves Trees, is available free of charge by calling 1-800-463-TREE.





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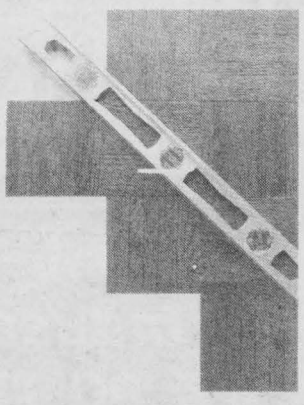

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Multiples pull up housing stats

Multiple units construction lifted total housing starts 7.1 per cent in February, offsetting a sharp drop in a single-detached starts, reported Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Total starts rose to a seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR)* of 153,100 units from a revised level of 142,900 units in January.

Construction of multiple units jumped nearly 50 per cent to 74,500 units SAAR in February from a weak 50,100 units in January. At the same time, starts of single-detached dwellings fell 21 per cent to 55,000 units SAAR from 69,200 units over the same period.

"The bitterly cold weather of January and early February hit new single-detached construction, just as it had done to the resale market in January. February's rebound in multiple units construction can be traced to a strong level of social housing units in Ontario and more normal levels of condominium construction in British Columbia," said Gilles Proulx, Chief Economist at CMHC's Market Analysis Centre.

"Construction, particularly for single dwellings, is expected to recover from the paralyzing cold in the next few months and take advantage of low mortgage rates, a good resale market and a healthier economy," Proulx added.

Urban housing starts in Ontario bounced back to 42,200 units (SAAR) in February, up from 34,800 units in January. The rise reflected a surge in starts of government-assisted multiple units. Starts of single-detached dwellings suffered a drop of around 25 per cent.

British Columbia urban starts jumped to 41,800 units (SAAR) from 31,200 units, mainly due to a rebound in condominium construction following weak figures in January. Starts of single-detached dwellings fell 10 per cent.

Quebec urban starts were hit hardest by the cold spell, with only 18,800 starts (SAAR) in February, down from 27,000 units in January. Both single and multiple dwelling units contributed to the drop, leaving total starts at the lowest level since September 1982.

Construction advanced further to an annual rate of 22,700 units (SAAR) in the Prairie region's urban centres during February, up from 21,000 units in January. Multiple units pulled Manitoba starts higher to 2,900 units. Total Alberta starts inched up to 19,400 units as an unusually high level of condominium construction offset a drop in single-detached starts. By contrast, construction fell to 400 units in Saskatchewan.

Urban starts fell to 4,000 units (SAAR) in the Atlantic region, from 5,300 units the month before. No starts were reported in Prince Edward Island and construction fell in Nova Scotia (to 1,900 units) and Newfoundland (600 units). Activity improved to 1,500 units in New Brunswick.

*The SAAR is a monthly figure that is adjusted to remove normal seasonal variation and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.



Log home living

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Chieftain photo by R. van Noppen

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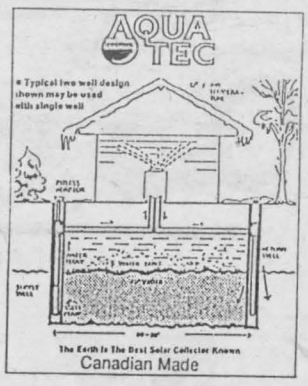

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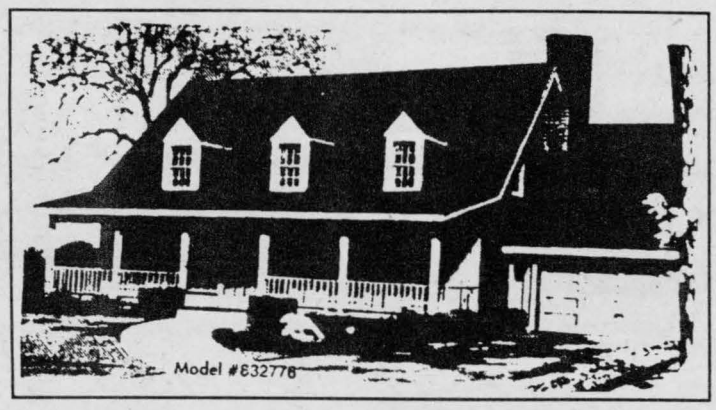

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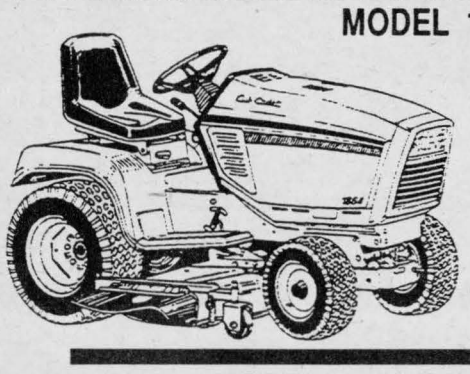

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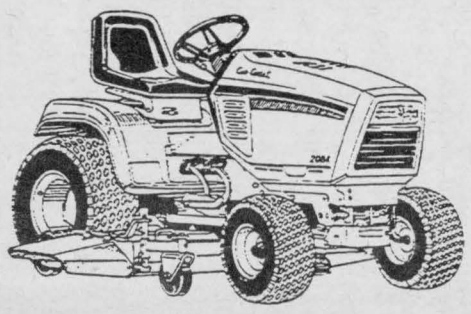

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