

INSIDE CLASSIFIED

LISTINGS BEGIN ON PAGE G5



ARTFUL SHOPPER

Outdoor living furniture gets better looking every year

See Page G3

LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS •

ALE

EDITOR: LISA MONFORTON 235-7428 FAX: 235-7379

MAY 19, 2007

TREND

Charity by the yard (sale)

A novel way to raise money for your favourite good cause

LISA KADANE
CALGARY HERALD

Mike Fournier came to the garage sale looking for an iron. He left, \$5 lighter, with a framed picture and a folding wooden chair.

Instead of spending that five-spot on a DVD rental or a grande chai tea latte, Elizabeth Castle, who organized the sale, will be donating it to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), a fact that makes a difference to Fournier.

"I'd rather shop at this (garage sale) than buddy's who's trying to make a buck," he said on a sunny Saturday morning in Sunnyside.

It must have mattered to the other garage sale patrons as well. All told, Castle raised \$700 for the JDRF (to be matched by another \$700 from her employer) by selling books, CDs, art, old computers, golf clubs, garden tools and furniture.

Calgarians have long been volunteering their time or donating money to charities, running or walking for them, and speaking out for causes that affect them personally. Now, they're organizing garage sales and donating the proceeds, not only doing good for themselves by paring down and recycling their possessions, but doing good for others by funneling the money where it's needed most.

One of Castle's best friends was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 1996, so she became an avid fundraiser for the disease.

"It's a cause really close to my heart," she says.

This year Castle decided to host a garage sale for the JDRF after another friend suggested it as an alternative way to raise money.

SEE CHARITY, PAGE G2



Mikael Kjellström, Calgary Herald
Elizabeth Castle hosted a garage sale to raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Online flea markets are fast becoming an efficient way for Albertans to feather their nests, save money and help the environment

PAULA BEAUCHAMP
FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

Few shoppers would raise an eyebrow at a \$1,000 sofa. But could you imagine furnishing your entire home for less?

When Candi Karrar and her family moved to Calgary last December, they brought scarcely more than the clothes on their backs. The family of seven had a house to move into, but little cash to buy the furniture they needed to turn their house into a home.

"All we had for the first three weeks were air mattresses," said Karrar, from Hamilton, Ont. "The cost of coming out here was overwhelming."

But thanks to the online garage sale site Kijiji Calgary, the family furnished their four-bedroom home and basement for less than \$1,000.

"We really lucked out," Karrar said. "I can't tell you how easy it was and what a difference it made."

Kijiji is one of a growing number of online local garage sales that allow locals to donate, exchange, sell and buy used goods person-to-person.

Others include classifieds.canada.com/calgary, Craigslist, Usedcalgary and Freecycle. Unlike eBay, the sites have a local focus and items are traded for free or at a fixed price.

Internet experts say local e-commerce is the next wave of the Internet, with an estimated 20 per cent more Canadian users logging on each month. In April, Kijiji recorded 3.2 million unique visitors to its Canadian sites, up from 1 million a year ago.

And Calgarians are among the most enthusiastic users to embrace the trend.

Although Craigslist — the United States' fifth most searched for brand — was set up simultaneously in Calgary and Edmonton, the Calgary site is now twice its neighbour's size.

At Usedeverywhere.ca, the story is the same.

As Calgary's population booms, it seems more shoppers are turning to e-commerce to avoid overcrowded shopping malls and understaffed retailers.

Others simply prefer to shop in their bathrobes, knowing they will avoid parking hassles when they pick up purchases from a

Today Wendy Rubner, a Usedcalgary "power user," would not dream of paying retail in a store without checking online first.

"I believe in recycling anything," the north west resident said. "I'd rather shop online if it meant saving something from landfill."

"Anything I've been looking for I've found."



Grant Black, Calgary Herald

Paula Beauchamp bought this cabinet on Kijiji for \$200 and re-stained it.

Rubner spends up to half an hour online each day and happily shops for family and friends.

She estimates her virtual garage sale savings total in the thousands.

"It's a hobby, I guess, but I'm disciplined," she said. "Most stuff is in really good condition and the photos help."

A 1950s wooden dresser, purchased for \$100, ranks among Rubner's best buys.

Others include a wooden trunk and a \$70 over-the-range microwave that was retailing for \$300.

While cheap toasters and coffee makers abound, a Danish teak sofa for \$40, a \$50 mid-century Silkeborg coffee table and an iconic Frem Rojle dining set are among the quality items spied online by the Herald.

But the best deals disappear quickly — often within minutes of posting.

Usedcalgary owner Don Barthel said many users had become devoted — even addicted — to online garage sales. "These sites are a lot like Myspace. It is user-posted content from people within your community."

"The most recent advertisements were probably posted in the last few minutes. In a way, it is a form of entertainment," he said.

Barthel initially set up Usedcalgary to reduce the demand for new manufactured goods, and, in turn, reduce the consumption of materials and energy and the production of greenhouse gases.

"When you look at the site and see something for \$3 or \$5, you know there is a different motivation behind the sale that isn't economic," he said.

SEE CHARITY, PAGE G2

VIRTUAL GARAGE SALE



Photo illustration:
Kathryn Molcak,
Calgary Herald

AROUND THE HOUSE

It's all about the kitchen...

SURVEY • For home shoppers, the kitchen is the most important room in the house, according to a Home Depot survey.

The renovation and home appliance retailer asked 1,500 Canadian women their opinions on home repairs; of those with a preference, the majority said the kitchen was the most closely scrutinized room.

Almost 40 per cent said the kitchen must be recently renovated, within the last two years, for them to seriously consider purchasing the home.

"If you're going to invest in renovations, investing in your kitchen is a smart move," the retail giant concluded.

"That said, if you don't have the budget to redo your entire kitchen there are plenty of options for upgrades that will get noticed, from replacing appliances and counters to simply refacing the cabinet and changing the hardware."

Results of the survey also suggest most women think the over-all condition of a home's exterior and interior at first glance is more important to them than selling price or the size of the lot or residence itself.

— CanWest News Service

Everyday uses for ordinary things

BOOK • Among the 2,317 ways to save money and time promised by this new Reader's Digest book (400 pages, \$14.95) there are these recipes for all-purpose cleaners:

"For fast cleanups around the kitchen, keep two recycled spray bottles filled with these vinegar-based solutions:

For glass, stainless steel and plastic laminate surfaces, fill a spray bottle with two parts water, one part distilled white vinegar and a couple of drops of dishwashing liquid.

For cleaning walls and other painted surfaces, mix up 1/2 cup white vinegar, 1 cup ammonia and 1/4 cup baking soda in 1 gallon (3.7 litres) water and pour some into a spray bottle. Spritz it on spots and stains whenever needed and wipe off with a clean towel."

— McClatchy Newspapers

For a quick colour update, try this:

TIP • Add an organic look to the master bedroom with grass cloth wallpaper.

■ Modernize your living room with zebra-striped pillows.

■ Lighten up a room that has intense color with white accessories.

Here are some resources that know colour:

Pantone Color Institute
www.pantone.com

The Trend Curve:
www.trendcurve.com.

— McClatchy Newspapers

samcorea

Marketing your home for all it's worth™

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www.samluxuryhomes.com

RE/MAX
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455 Rodeo Ridge \$1,225,000



Backing onto a beautiful treed ravine with views overlooking the golf course, the river, COP and the downtown skyline! Like new 2-str, with dev'd walkout, offering a total of over 3500 s.f. w/ 4 bdrms + den on a 1/4 acre lot, mahogany & slate floors, granite counters, high-end appliances, 3 stone fireplaces, custom built-ins, curved stairway, granite topped wet bar, 20x30-ft deck, triple garage. A tranquil setting, steps to the golf course & just a 30 min drive from downtown.